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MACAULAY

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BY THE

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PREFATORY NOTE

I republish this work, enlarged and revised, in the hope that it may interest general readers.

A. S. G. CANNING.

ROSTREVOR, CO. DOWN,
May, 1913.

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ESSAYIST

PART I

ESSAYIST

DURING the last century it is remarkable how many eminent British statesmen and writers have proclaimed to the world their love for the ancient literature of Greece and Rome. The fourteenth Earl of Derby and the first Lord Lytton, who began their political lives as ardent Liberals and ended them as steady Conservatives, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Macaulay, the former a Conservative in youth and prime but a Liberal in advanced age, the latter a consistent Liberal through life, have alike proved, by speeches and writings, their intense love of classic literature.[1]

Even during the toil of public life, in middle

[1] Sir George Trevelyan, Bt., writes of his uncle Macaulay: "He knew the characters and careers of the great men who had paced the Forum as intimately as those of his own rivals in Parliament" ("Life of Macaulay," vol. ii. chap. iv.).

age, and thus amid private as well as public cares, Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone evidently relieved their harassed minds by examining and translating the works of Homer and other Greek writers, both dwelling on the subject of classic literature, Greek especially, with the keenest interest and delight. Lord Derby's literal and excellent translation of the "Iliad," and Mr. Gladstone's profound examination of Greek literature in his "Homeric Age" and "Juventus Mundi," were all written during the leisure allowed by public life. Yet in those labours of research and reflection, which often weary and sometimes exhaust the faculties alike of teachers and students, these two Prime Ministers apparently found mental relief from the cares, thoughts, and troubles of English political life.

The first Lord Lytton, more distinguished as a novelist than as a statesman, reveals the same love for classic thoughts and times, both in his books and speeches; but, on the whole, Latin literature and Roman times interest him more than those of Greece. In his "Last Days of Pompeii" especially he shows, from his exact, minute descriptions of manners and customs, how

he loved to recall those times, and how vividly they were present to his mind in all their full reality.

Lord Macaulay's reverential love for classic literature apparently far exceeded his admiration for classic times, manners, and customs, although even they interested him greatly. In all his ideas and opinions he was essentially a modern Englishman of Liberal views. Few men appreciated modern improvements more eagerly, or detested the ignorance and prejudices of former times more thoroughly than he. All through his Essays, especially those on Bacon, Addison, and Ranke's History of the Popes, he is constantly preferring present times to the past, and anticipating a far better and happier future for mankind than the world has yet seen. The romantic legends of the Middle Ages and of Chivalry apparently possessed no charm for him, as they did for Scott and Byron. On the contrary, the cruelty, ignorance, and superstition so prevalent in the Middle Ages alike impressed him with perhaps an exaggerated contempt and abhorrence.

The odious injustice of the ancient Athenians towards many of their most excellent men—

Socrates, Æsop, etc.—as well as some cruel laws of ancient Rome, would also doubtless have shocked his civilized mind; but for the literature and peculiar genius of both Greece and Rome Macaulay felt not only an admiration but a reverence which induced him, perhaps unconsciously, rather to undervalue the literature and literary men of his own enlightened times.

"Macaulay had very slight acquaintance with the works of some of the best writers of his own generation. He was not fond of new lights, unless they had been kindled at the ancient beacons, and he was apt to prefer a third-rate author who had formed himself after some recognized model to a man of high genius whose style and method were strikingly different from anything that had gone before." [1]

Although a Scottishman by family, Macaulay was apparently free from those strong national partialities which usually distinguish his countrymen, and which even Alison and Scott often reveal in their histories and novels. Neither Scottish exploits of former times, the peculiar habits and legends of the Highlanders, nor the

[1] Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay," vol. ii.

poems attributed to Ossian, aroused his pride or attracted his fancy. Even his illustrious fellow-countryman Sir Walter Scott, whose great mind and immortal works justly rendered him the pride of North Britain, neither much pleased nor interested Macaulay. He was actually in comparative ignorance of many, perhaps most, of his writings.[1]

It is less surprising, therefore, that he confessed "not having formed so high an opinion of his character as most people seem to entertain," and also that he thought him in politics "a bitter and unscrupulous partisan."[2] Yet those who had the privilege of Scott's acquaintance have generally testified that there was little bitterness in his kind, genial nature, while the heavy charge of unscrupulousness would be much more easy to allege than to prove against him. In his admirable historical novels—"Waverley," "Old Mortality," "Woodstock," etc.—where he describes the political and religious contentions of

[1] "He knew no more of his famous contemporary than of Dryden and Addison, and not a tenth part so much as of Swift, Johnson, or Cowper" (Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay," vol. ii. chap. vii.).

[2] Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay," vol. ii.

Great Britain, he has succeeded in pleasing as well as interesting readers of all denominations, and their beneficial effect upon the public mind has been generally acknowledged.[1]

But a man of Macaulay's keen intelligence would not probably have expressed this opinion of Scott had it not arisen at least partly from a comparative ignorance of his works. In fact, Macaulay, especially at the outset of his literary career, was himself an extremely vehement, if not bitter, political partisan, though he cannot fairly be called unscrupulous. In his first beautiful Essay on Milton, which "excited greater attention than any article which had ever appeared not immediately connected with the politics of the day,"[2] he displays this party spirit most clearly. In common with Milton and many other able and distinguished men, Macaulay viewed the arbitrary conduct of King Charles I with deep indignation. Yet Milton, while advocating the rights and liberties of his English fellow-

[1] See Alison's remarks on this subject ("History of Europe," vol. i.).

[2] Dean Milman's "Memoir of Macaulay," p. 9.

countrymen, was by no means inclined to extend the same rights, or, indeed, any rights, to some of his political and religious opponents. In his remarkable Essay on "Peace with Irish Rebels," he recommends a policy towards them, and towards his fellow-English Roman Catholics fully as intolerant and tyrannical as the most extreme measures of Charles I and his despotic minister Lord Strafford. Yet Milton has generally enjoyed the reputation of being a staunch friend to human liberty, and when advocating the rights of his fellow-Protestants throughout the world, his noble language and eloquent style would apparently justify this belief.

There can be no surer test of a man's real love of liberty than his conduct or wishes respecting those whom he believes irreconcilably opposed to his own opinions. If any candid reader, therefore, carefully studies his Essay on "Peace with Irish Rebels" and the policy he recommends his fellow-countrymen to adopt towards the Irish, he will perceive that Milton's love of liberty almost disappears when irritated by the conduct of those he considers barbarous or superstitious

foes. Yet Macaulay, though making hardly any allusion to Milton's Irish policy, actually writes that "nowhere does the great poet rise higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his spirits are excited by conflict," etc.[1]

It is in these very passages of religious or political controversy where his love of human freedom seems to yield greatly to political enthusiasm. For instance, he wrote a beautiful and most affecting poem on a cruel massacre of Piedmontese Protestants by Italian Roman Catholics; any one reading it would imagine the author a keen advocate for human liberty of thought and feeling. But when mentioning the Irish, or even his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, his feelings seem rather changed. The terrible massacre at Drogheda by Cromwell he scarcely blames, judging from the tone of his writings about Ireland. In fact, Cromwell, especially in Ireland, practically enforced the policy recommended by his friend and admirer, Milton.

It was well said by Archbishop Whately that "party spirit has a tendency to pardon anything in those who belong to a party and nothing in

[1] P. 57.

those who do not."[1] To this tendency, so injurious, if not fatal, to liberty and justice, Milton sometimes yielded, as his writings prove; while Macaulay, though far less violent and far more enlightened, is not as free from it as a man so amiable and well informed should have been. While admitting Cromwell's Irish career as one of wholesale extirpation,[2] he evidently views his great hero's cruelties with feelings very different from those which animate his glowing descriptions of similar acts authorized or committed by political opponents.

Nearly two centuries elapsed between the times of Milton and Macaulay, and in each instance we find an able, illustrious, patriotic man inveighing powerfully against the tyranny of religious or political opponents, but unable to view the crimes of partisans with equally consistent detestation. The fierce, even relentless, bitterness of Milton is indeed never equalled by Macaulay; but it must be remembered that the former wrote amid all the exciting influences of civil war, the latter in a calm period of profound

[1] Annotation to Bacon's "Essays."
[2] "History of England," chap. i.

domestic peace. But they alike manifest an approval of Cromwell's conduct as well as character, which appears more founded on enthusiasm than on justice. His wise rule in England, his wonderful self-control under every sort of calumny, insult, and irritation, and his admirable firmness in restraining the violence of his followers against both personal and political enemies have been acknowledged by most parties. But to approve his cruelties in Ireland like Milton, or make light of them like Macaulay, are remarkable proofs how far an enthusiastic party spirit, or hero-worship, can allure even able and liberal-minded men, not only from feelings of ordinary humanity but from the rules of simple consistency.

Macaulay in his Essay on Milton apparently considers him a steady lover of liberty and freedom. He has been so regarded by most of his Protestant fellow-countrymen, yet he apparently opposed even tolerating Roman Catholicism, which was still the religion of some among his most enlightened fellow-countrymen as well as of most Christian countries. He warmly sympathized with foreign Protestants, who in

his time were often persecuted by Roman Catholic Governments, and he also pitied and tried to console the illustrious Galileo, when imprisoned by the Italian Inquisition.

All over the world Milton would have doubtless compassionated, perhaps even eloquently advocated, the cause of the oppressed and persecuted, provided that the oppressors were opposed to his own views, or that to some extent the opinions of the persecuted resembled his own. But this party spirit was surely no proof of his love of real liberty; had he even tried to moderate his hero Cromwell's severities towards Irish Roman Catholics, or devoted his majestic eloquence to advocating merciful principles among triumphant partisans, he would thus have established his fame as a champion of human rights far more gloriously and decidedly than by the most eloquent declamation on behalf of his own religious or political views.

Yet his prose works must be searched in vain for anything of the kind. Even towards those whose religious opinions differed little from his own, Milton's language and sentiments were haughty, tyrannical, and arrogant to the last

degree, if their politics were opposed to his own. When the Irish Presbyterian clergy at and near Belfast disapproved of the Commonwealth and the King's execution, Milton regarded and apparently wished to treat them as mischievous rebels, who either had no right to have any opinions of their own, or at least were highly blamable for daring to express them.

"Utterly forgetting to be ministers of the Gospel, they presume to open their mouths not 'in the spirit of meekness,' as like dissemblers they pretend, but with as much devilish malice, impudence, and falsehood as any Irish rebel could have uttered, and from a barbarous nook of Ireland brand us with the extirpation of laws and liberties, things which they seem [to Milton] as little to understand as aught that belong to good letters or humanity. . . . And let them take heed lest while their silence as to these matters might have kept them blameless and secure under those proceedings which they so feared to partake in, that these their treasonous attempts and practices have not involved them in a far worse guilt of rebellion," etc.[1]

[1] "Articles of Peace with Irish Rebels," pp. 194-9.

Macaulay, strange to say, scarcely alludes either in his Essays or subsequent History to Milton's remarkable dispute with the Irish Presbyterians. "They [Irish Presbyterians] were among the first to protest against the trial of the King, and to denounce his execution as murder. The Royalists and Episcopalians joined indeed in this protest upon their favourite maxims of passive obedience and non-resistance, but it ought to be carefully remembered that the Presbyterians were guided by no such slavish principles. . . . They conceived it to be a monstrous violation of all liberty and law, and a more arbitrary and dangerous exercise of power than any which could be laid to the charge of the King, for an armed force to expel with violence out of the House of Commons the majority of its Members," etc.[1]

Macaulay dwells almost exclusively on the best works of his favourite, his sublime poetry, or the fine treatise the "Areopagitica." Probably of all Milton's writings those referring to Ireland are least known to British readers, yet none reveal his true character and temper so clearly. In

[1] Reid's "Presbyterian Church in Ireland," vol. ii.

his poems, his mind being free from irritation, and uninfluenced by human passions, his grand imagination found expression in beautiful language and noble thoughts, while in the "Areopagitica" and a few other prose works he tries to convert some men to his views whose opinions he respected.

Many readers, Macaulay apparently among them, judging Milton from these works, have been shocked and offended at Dr. Johnson's censure of him. But that shrewd, profound old moralist evidently knew more of Milton's arrogant bitterness than his enthusiastic admirers permitted themselves to do, by carefully studying those works which chiefly roused his temper and thus revealed his feelings. Although far superior to even Cromwell and all other political partisans in education and refinement of thought, yet in bitterness, intolerance, and even discourtesy towards those he believed irreconcilable opponents he probably equalled some of the most fanatical soldiers in Cromwell's army.[1]

[1] "Milton's warmest advocates must allow that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence" (Johnson's "Life of Milton"; see Milton's "Articles of Peace with Irish Rebels," "Defensio Populi," and "Iconoclast," for justification of Johnson's statement).

Macaulay throughout his brilliant Essay on Milton was evidently in a state of mental enchantment with his glorious poems. These sublime compositions, when examined by a young man of Macaulay's exquisite literary taste and fervent spirit, effected a complete mental conquest of their student. Pure and just admiration for the poet led to the most enthusiastic and unreasoning veneration for the man. Scarcely a word of blame or even disapproval does Macaulay express towards one whose splendid genius apparently overcame his judgment while captivating his imagination.

In a subsequent edition of his Essays, Macaulay, when older and wiser, owns that this one contained "scarcely a paragraph of which his matured judgment approved," yet probably few readers would wish it much altered even while disapproving some of its sentiments. Considering its length, it is perhaps one of the most pleasing and brilliant Essays in the English language. It is, in fact, the fervent panegyric of a youthful, enthusiastic mind, upon one whose noble genius inspired a brilliant eloquence like its own.

" We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word, the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it, the earnestness with which we should endeavour to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation," etc.[1]

Yet it must surely be admitted by all lovers of truth, that while Macaulay's admiration for Milton as a poet is well deserved, his intense reverence for the man carries him beyond reason, by the force of those political antipathies and sympathies which these illustrious men shared in common.

At the close of his Essay, Macaulay admires and praises his favourite for the " deadly hatred he bore to bigots and tyrants." That Milton's hatred of opponents was indeed " deadly " there can be little doubt in the minds of those acquainted with his prose writings. But surely a hatred to bigots and tyrants is one of those sentiments which all consistent lovers of human liberty should strive to moderate and keep within the limits of charity and common sense.

[1] P. 57.

If through enthusiasm, or any mental excitement, people allow their dislike of those they consider bigots and tyrants to become a "deadly hatred," they may be easily induced to commit or sanction acts of bigotry and tyranny towards those who have infuriated them beyond all self-control.

This was apparently Milton's case. Cromwell's Irish Catholic victims suffered as cruelly as the Italian Protestant martyrs whose massacre he so pathetically deplored in verse. Yet not a word, apparently not a thought, of compassion is shown in his writings towards these or any other conquered religious or political opponents. Milton, therefore, may indeed be justly called the earnest, consistent advocate for the liberty of his own partisans, and many people may believe that they were more friendly to human liberty than his opponents were; but surely not till a man can bring himself to advocate the mental freedom of the most inveterate religious and political foes has he proved his real adherence to the principle of human freedom. Yet this proof Milton hardly reveals in his controversial or political works.

Macaulay's Essays on Hallam's English History and on Machiavelli were written soon after the Essay on Milton, in a less enthusiastic style.

In his Essay on the Italian statesman and writer, Macaulay warmly advocates Italian liberty, and to some extent tries to vindicate Machiavelli, whose deceitful principles were very generally condemned.[1] This Essay, however, though highly interesting, is perhaps less carefully written than the other; for Macaulay is, in fact, trying throughout to defend one bad man against others of equal duplicity, by intimating that Machiavelli's principles, though odious and detestable, often really actuated those who chiefly blamed him at this period. Yet Machiavelli, despite his extraordinary deceit, was believed to sincerely advocate Italian freedom, and this supposed patriotism is enough to enlist Macaulay's sympathy for a man whom he terms in many respects utterly worthless, and without shame or scruple.

Whether Machiavelli and many of his fellow-

[1] Shakespeare makes even the merciless Gloster term him "the murderous Machiavel" ("Henry VI").

countrymen were at this time morally degraded through the influence of bad government alone, may be disputed by politicians, but it was clear enough that such men were little fitted to wield power or to appreciate liberty. Yet Macaulay closes this Essay by rather applauding the popular cry of "Death to tyrants," though Machiavelli was well fitted in some respects to be a tyrant himself, and even to be a tyrant's most unscrupulous minister. After rather vindicating Machiavelli as being no worse a man than others incurring less censure, Macaulay examines Hallam's "Constitutional History" in a more calm and reasoning spirit. As a rule, he shares Hallam's political views, and does eloquent justice to his painstaking diligence and learning. Yet Hallam's History, though very instructive and valuable, can hardly be thought interesting to many readers, but Macaulay's able review, blending instruction and interest throughout, drew general attention to its high merit. Hallam, though a man of profound learning and refined taste—as proved by his last work on European literature—possessing also a remarkably calm judgment, seldom,

if ever, renders his style interesting. Even this excellent work, therefore, on a most interesting study, is dry and tedious reading; a few pages of it are more wearisome than a long Essay by Macaulay on comparatively uninteresting subjects. He has, however, been called "superior to Macaulay in judgment, though inferior in graces of style";[1] and usually their opinions on English history are much alike.

Their descriptions of the great Revolution and the Commonwealth reveal a rather similar spirit —the one expressed in dry, cautious language, the other in fervent, and often vehement, eloquence. They are both thoroughly Whig writers; the improvements in domestic legislation, the education and the prosperity of the working classes, the abolition of civil and religious disabilities, and complete religious toleration are all to them subjects far more interesting and important than the military and naval triumphs or the foreign conquests of their fellow-countrymen.

It might, perhaps, be thought that both historians say too little about the military and

[1] Shaw's "Manual of English Literature."

naval strength of foreign nations, and the consequent necessity of maintaining the British armaments in a state of thorough efficiency. But the minds of both Hallam and Macaulay are so devoted to legislation, and social, moral, and educational improvements *within* the Empire, that they comparatively disregard the paramount importance of its national defences and of encouraging a military spirit in Great Britain, if only for the sake of defending and preserving those blessings of domestic peace and social amelioration which they themselves so justly value.

The cause of Charles I and the principles of Jacobitism, Hallam and Macaulay alike repudiate. Macaulay rather scornfully observes in this Essay, respecting the decline of Jacobitism, that "nobody was left to fight for that wretched cause, and very few to drink for it."

There is little enthusiasm in his review of Hallam's work; the subject prevents it, and forces even the brilliant and impetuous young essayist to be nearly as cautious and cool as the grave historian himself. Yet though Macaulay's enthusiasm is thus checked, his

delightful style always expresses his thoughts, and in his masterly hands even Hallam's dry history becomes attractive to most thoughtful readers.

Dr. Johnson declares that some admirers of Pope's "Homer" must be disappointed in the original,[1] and Macaulay's brilliant sketch of Hallam's history likewise makes it seem far more interesting than the work itself will probably be found by many students. Even in this Essay on a dry historical work, written while Macaulay was still very young, he shows his natural power of making every subject more or less attractive; whereas Hallam, despite his good sense and vast learning, cannot render even the interesting study of European literature entertaining. Macaulay's natural love of historical inquiry first appears in this Essay, proclaiming the future historian, who almost for the first time in England rendered historical facts as interesting, if not exciting, as fiction, and whose portraits of real personages were as lifelike as if drawn from personal knowledge. He praises Hallam's fair-

[1] "Life of Pope."

ness and research while recommending his history to the public in the warmest terms. But Hallam's work, though most valuable as a book of reference, is not ever likely to be popular. Even the two great English historians of the last century, Hume and Gibbon, though distrusted by many as anti-Christian, and by no means superior to Hallam in either wisdom or learning, have each made their writings more interesting to general readers.

According to the high authority of Dean Milman, Macaulay's most important Essays are those on British history—the grand subject which through life chiefly interested his mind and finally displayed its greatest powers. In his Essay on Mackintosh's "British Revolution of 1688," Macaulay first mentions that most eventful period to which his future history was devoted. This most remarkable time evidently interested him more deeply and constantly than any of the immense variety of subjects which attracted his powerful mind. In the historical drama of an enlightened nation firmly resisting and finally banishing an arbitrary king by an almost bloodless revolu-

tion, at least in England, Macaulay's mind and fancy felt a special delight. To him James II was like the dangerous villain of an exciting romance, endowed with almost every odious quality, as well as supreme power, surrounded by cruel, unscrupulous satellites, while sternly endeavouring to enslave the minds and bodies of his subjects.

"James was a most bloody and remorseless persecutor. He had hunted down the scattered remnants of the Covenanters with a barbarity of which no other prince of modern times, Philip II excepted, had ever shown himself capable. He had indulged himself in the amusement of seeing the torture of the Boot inflicted on the wretched enthusiasts whom persecution had driven to resistance," etc.[1]

In this excited description Macaulay, as is sometimes the case with him, tells the truth, but not the whole truth. This punishment was the legal penalty enacted by men long before the days of James II, and it was probably his formal duty to witness its infliction, and whether it gratified him or not can hardly

[1] P. 101.

be known, while his feelings made no difference to the sufferers. It should be remembered that most of the leading Covenanters advocated the principles of religious persecution to its fullest extent, and condemned toleration altogether. It is a historical fact that on the restoration of Charles II he was publicly requested by a deputation of Scotch Covenanters not to tolerate either Prelacy or Popery according to the terms of the Covenant. Thus, on the accession of William III many of the Covenanters were driven to rebellion, not by his persecution of themselves, but by his unexpected toleration of their enemies, upon whom they naturally, perhaps, but scarcely in a Christian spirit, wished to retaliate.

These facts should be remembered, not to extenuate, far less justify, James's cruelty to them, but to correct the idea that persecution alone drove the Covenanters to rebellion, when they were themselves bound by the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant to oppose even tolerating either Roman Catholicism or Prelacy. In the review on Mackintosh, Macaulay says little of his future great hero, William III,

and seems, indeed, rather reluctant to dwell much on the subject of the Revolution, as if mentally reserving it for a future and more complete examination. He praises Mackintosh's history, and recommends it as well as that of Hallam, perhaps wishing to increase public interest in British history before producing his own great work upon it. In neither of these Essays, however, does he often mention Hume, Burnet, Clarendon, or Robertson, the four chief authorities on the subject; he apparently prefers Hallam and Mackintosh to all others, for, generally speaking, he shares their political opinions.

Yet neither his able exposition nor eloquent praise can render them interesting writers. This Macaulay probably perceived when resolving to write British history on similar principles, but in a very different style. In his Essays, Macaulay does not usually dwell long on historical subjects, though enough to indicate, with eloquent power, those principles which he so fully developed in his final work. He evidently prefers training his active, inquiring spirit while a young man, by studying an immense variety of subjects, and thus prepares

his powerful mind for the great work which he long contemplated.

The Essay on Lord Bacon is certainly one of the most instructive among them. We have here the highly educated scholar of the nineteenth century minutely examining the great mind and original genius of one who lived in an age unfavourable to their acknowledgment, if not to their comprehension, as Bacon himself proclaimed when in his will he commended his philosophy to the appreciation and study of future generations. In this Essay, Macaulay shows no religious or political bias, but devotes his attractive style and brilliant language to explaining and commending Bacon's views and philosophy. He observes that his works, except the short Essays, were very little read even in modern highly educated England; their deep and accurate reasoning, their wisdom and value, were alike obscured and made difficult reading by their dry, uninteresting, and what Macaulay elsewhere terms their "odious style."

An eloquent young writer, combining profound learning with a brilliant style, like Macaulay, was precisely the person required to render

Bacon's works both known and pleasing to modern English readers of sense and taste. He perceived the reason of their unpopularity while he himself keenly appreciated their value. Without making wearisome extracts, he studied them closely, and then, in his own delightful style and instructive language, he, as it were, translated their meaning and purport in a manner as pleasing to the reading many as to the learned few. He therefore adorns Bacon's wisdom by introducing it to the public with a beauty and an attractiveness which that great man with all his intellectual powers could never command. Thus Bacon's writings, instructive to all, though incomprehensible to many, Macaulay rendered clear and interesting to an educated posterity well able to appreciate their hitherto disregarded merit.

A long period elapsed between the lives of Bacon and Macaulay; the former's thoughtful philosophy had slowly but steadily attracted and convinced some learned minds in England and on the Continent. But his harsh style, when devoted to difficult subjects, had always repelled a large number, even among reading

men, from their perusal. They now fell into the hands of a writer who possessed a special power of conveying most profound thought in a peculiarly attractive manner. Macaulay excelled and probably delighted in rendering learned or difficult subjects interesting to the comparatively ignorant, as well as to the well-informed, and perhaps no modern essayist has equalled him in this intellectual exploit. In such an age, therefore, as the nineteenth century in Great Britain, when reading became so general, all kinds of books cheap, and when the public are supplied with an immense variety of good and bad, instructive and trifling works, Macaulay's literary powers are especially valuable. He boldly competed with even most fascinating and sensational novelists in tempting not merely the learned but the comparatively frivolous and thoughtless to study and admire works of standard merit. His success is most remarkable in this Essay upon Lord Bacon. He here presents in easy, attractive language the objects, views, and thoughts of this wise philosopher, rendering them instructive to most readers by the power of his own genius,

while even to the learned they surely seem far more acceptable than before.

Many persons who would have found a few pages of Bacon too difficult for their taste, if not for their comprehension, studied, admired, and understood his thoughts when presented by a literary interpreter so pleasing and so instructive. In this Essay Macaulay virtually introduces the grand old philosopher of Elizabeth's reign striving to impart his wisdom in quaint, often obscure language, and fettered by a constrained style, to a new world of educated readers, intelligent, fastidious, often sarcastic, yet well fitted to appreciate the profound sense and brilliancy of language which are united in Macaulay. Of all his early Essays none is perhaps so practically useful as this. Lord Bacon, unlike his immortal contemporary, Shakespeare, was unable, despite his wisdom, to make his works both instructive and interesting to people either of his own time or to posterity.

This power of rare combination few literary men have possessed. Thus Lord Bacon and Mr. Hallam resemble each other in profound wisdom, calm judgment, and extensive learning; yet these

great men cannot adorn or enhance their vast advantages by eloquence, brilliancy, or any charm of style for general readers. On the other hand, the poet, the novelist, the historian, Shakespeare, Walter Scott, and Macaulay alike, though in different ways, possessed this power of uniting instruction with pleasure, and have each usually made the noblest use of it.[1] In Shakespeare we find the profoundest wisdom and the most accurate knowledge of human character, combined with every excellence of which literary genius has ever been capable. In Scott's best works we find history and romance united—the former representing ancient times, manners, and customs as faithfully as the latter portray those feelings and emotions common to all times and inseparable from human nature. Macaulay in his Essays and History is compelled to reject fiction altogether, while devoting himself to inspire historical events and characters with that keen interest and peculiar attraction with which fiction is often alone associated.

[1] "There can be no doubt that as to the actual life of certain periods Shakespeare and Scott are more trustworthy historians than Hume, or even Clarendon" (Dean Milman's "Memoir of Lord Macaulay," p. 23).

In former times, when historical events and characters were studied merely by a thoughtful few, and comparatively neglected by a large majority of even sensible men, Macaulay's writings would have been far less useful to the public. They were thoroughly adapted to the time at which they appeared, since they inclined all intelligent British readers to study subjects full of interest and value to every one, yet too often confined to the attention of a small, serious, and reflecting minority. He earnestly praises Lord Bacon's mingled "audacity and sobriety" which enabled him to introduce a new philosophy without vehemently attacking former systems or offending public opinion by ridicule or bitterness.[1]

But Macaulay himself well merits praise for *his* mingled audacity and sobriety, or, rather, mingled enthusiasm and calm judgment, even in this single Essay, his object being evidently to

[1] "Bacon had no touch of that disputatious temper he often censured in his predecessors. He effected a vast intellectual revolution in opposition to a vast mass of prejudices, yet he never engaged in any controversy. His philosophy, as he said, came as a guest, not as a conqueror." ("Essay," p. 266).

improve as well as encourage the literary taste of his time. Some men, possessing his knowledge and profound erudition, would have been tempted to write bitterly upon the frivolity of modern taste and the superficial style of many popular authors; or would have tried, by learned, weighty, and probably dull arguments to commend works they approved by condemning others. Yet had he adopted this course, he would have found comparatively few readers. He might have made many true remarks, but they would have gratified only those people who were already agreed with him.

The reading public required pleasure as well as instruction, and Macaulay furnished them both. Few scholars, indeed, would have contemplated adorning Bacon's profound works with the charm of eloquence, the fire of enthusiasm, and the richness of imagery with all of which this Essay abounds. Probably the grave philosopher himself would have been surprised to recognize the lessons of his calm wisdom explained and praised with all the combined beauty and power of the English language, but Macaulay's purpose was evident. His keen

observation perceived the immense increase of literature and of literary men in his time. He perceived the numerous efforts, whether rewarded by success or crushed by failure, of eminent novelists and romance-writers to attract the vast multitude of British readers. He also knew how many excellent English works were comparatively neglected, chiefly owing to their deficiency, not in worth but in interest, the latter being often the chief merit of many popular works. He perceived with regret how many standard works —Bacon's among others—were really unfitted by their harsh if not obsolete style to interest some readers who might otherwise enjoy and appreciate them. It seemed, therefore, to his discerning mind, an unjust fate for Bacon's works to be written at a time when there were few readers of any description, and to remain comparatively unknown during times of general enlightenment.

Macaulay, however, apparently understood the taste of his own period as accurately as he did the wisdom of a former one. His Essay on Bacon was well suited to modern tastes, feelings, and knowledge. Thus he not only gratified

learned and studious readers but attracted many others, whom the subject, but for his rendering, would have rather repelled; for Macaulay may fairly be said to rival most novelists and sensational writers by the delightful charm of his style alone. In his pages deep interest and important information are blended with such rare taste and judgment that his admirers, like those of Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens, were found among classes and individuals having little in common with each other. Yet these three great writers all relied more or less on their own imaginations as well as on those of their readers for their wonderful success. But Macaulay relied upon his extraordinary memory, his immense learning, and literary taste. "His memory seemed to expand with its accumulating treasures. . . . He has said, and he was a most unboastful man, that if Milton's great poem were lost, he thought he could accurately commit to writing at least all the first part of 'Paradise Lost.'" [1]

Like Bacon, whose powerful mind preferred the wonders of reality to those of fancy, Macaulay delighted in adorning practical wisdom with a

[1] Milman's "Memoir of Lord Macaulay," p. 14.

beauty and brilliancy of language usually devoted to works of imagination.

"Bacon knew that all the secrets feigned by poets to have been written in the books of enchanters are worthless when compared with the mighty secrets which are written in the book of Nature, and which, with time and patience, will be read there. He knew that all the wonders wrought by all the talismans in fables were trifles when compared to the wonders which might reasonably be expected from the philosophy of fruit." [1]

In this feeling Macaulay probably shared Milton's sentiment describing Divine philosophy as often thought repulsive or uninteresting, yet which ought to delight as well as improve the human mind.[2]

Yet it must be owned that many people besides "dull fools", probably found the style of Bacon somewhat "harsh and crabbed."

[1] P. 264.

[2] "How charming is Divine philosophy!
Not harsh or crabbed as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets
Where no crude surfeit reigns." ("Comus.")

Macaulay well knew this, and instead of censuring or ridiculing those readers who were comparatively deficient in learning, judgment, or good taste, took a surer way to arouse fresh interest in Bacon's works by explaining them in language as clear and easy as it was eloquent and profound. Bacon's writings were thus, in fact, modernized, explained, and placed in their proper position before enlightened readers of the nineteenth century, many of whom hardly knew previously how much they and all other civilized, intellectual people, especially in Great Britain, owed to his original mind and practical philosophy.

In this Essay, and in many others, Macaulay expresses no religious or political opinions. Thus all readers can study it with pleasure and without the least distrust or vexation. Although his political views have been greatly admired and trusted by many, it is probable that those Essays which are free from politics are the most valuable to general readers; for it is in these alone we find "his serene intellect," comparatively, "devoid of enthusiasm," like his own description of Lord Halifax.[1] He displays all the treasures of his

[1] "History of England."

vast mind, rare memory, and refined taste without any mental irritation, whether of triumph or depression, without either vehement praise or strong censure. He thus rather resembles Bulwer Lytton's model physician, a "Calm Intelligence," certainly of the highest order and superior to those passionate emotions which often and perhaps unconsciously affect and weaken his great mind.[1]

Macaulay also shows this mingled calmness and acute penetration very remarkably in his Essay on Ranke's "History of the Popes"—perhaps the most instructive of all his Essays except those on Lord Bacon and on History. In this so-called review, however, he says little about Ranke's work, though that little is favourable, and makes no quotations from it. He is now engaged on a subject which indeed elicits his varied knowledge, retentive memory, and natural brilliancy of expression with clearness of thought.

[1] "To the true physician there is an inexpressible sanctity in the sick-chamber. At its threshold the more human passions quit their hold on his heart. He must enter that room—a Calm Intelligence. He is disabled for his mission if he suffer aught to obscure the keen, quiet glance of his science" ("Strange Story," chap. x.).

Macaulay is unlike most writers on religious history, which usually involves controversy; it interests him extremely, without irritating his temper or even much exciting his feelings. He therefore writes about it in a much more cool, philosophic spirit than he is perhaps able to do when dealing with political history—his favourite subject above all others. Accordingly, this Essay, which is simply a brief yet most instructive sketch of Roman Catholic history, is surprisingly free either from prejudice or enthusiasm, feelings which in Macaulay's mind are so often united. In describing the amazing vitality of Roman Catholicism amid constant dangers, he introduces the British Reformation and the French Revolution of the eighteenth century, which last event established avowed Atheism in political power for the first time since the rise of Christianity. The rapid success of Protestantism in Europe, and the yet more rapid but transitory triumph of Atheism in France, he describes with great eloquence aided by vast research, yet without apparent enthusiasm for or against any particular religious belief. He eloquently describes the practical result of the Roman Catholic system,

without bitterness or showing any preference for its principles.

"She [the Roman Catholic Church] thoroughly understands what no other Church has ever understood: how to deal with enthusiasts. She neither submits to enthusiasm nor proscribes it, but uses it. . . . She knows that when religious feelings have obtained the complete empire of the mind they impart a strange energy; that they raise men above the domain of pain and pleasure; that obloquy becomes glory; that death itself is contemplated only as the beginning of a higher and happier life. She knows a person in this state is no object of contempt. She accordingly enlists him in her service, assigns to him some forlorn hope in which intrepidity and impetuosity are more wanted than judgment and self-command, and sends him forth with her benediction and her applause. . . . The ignorant enthusiast whom the Anglican Church makes an enemy—and, whatever the polite and learned may think, a most dangerous enemy—the Roman Catholic Church makes a champion." [1]

The contests between Roman Catholicism and

[1] Essay on Ranke, pp. 317–18.

its chief opponents, Protestantism, Deism, and Atheism, he describes graphically indeed, but with perfect calmness, while the previous dispute between the Latin and Greek Churches he scarcely mentions. He dwells much on the remarkable vitality of Roman Catholicism, without, however, mentioning the yet greater antiquity and equally remarkable vitality of Judaism, surviving the cruel effects of political and religious persecution from pagans, Christians, and Mohammedans throughout the semi-civilized world. Nor does he allude to the Greek, Armenian, or African Christians, who claim equal antiquity with those of Rome.

Macaulay expresses surprise at the power of endurance in Roman Catholicism when assailed by many foes in countries where it was once supreme; but it should be remembered that in its chief European strongholds—Spain and Italy—though occasionally menaced by the invasions of French infidel soldiers and doctrines, it has never been seriously assailed except by these unpopular strangers. The French Revolution of the last century, when attacking Roman Catholicism, denounced all other religious systems

equally, declaring and rendering public worship false and punishable by law. The re-establishment of Christianity in France, its political triumph over avowed Atheism, and the remarkable and somewhat sudden cessation in Protestant progress in some countries, are events all carefully noticed by Macaulay without his manifesting either exultation or disappointment.

He evidently thinks in this Essay that Protestantism is at a standstill throughout the Continent, and that the real contention there lies between Roman Catholics, Deists, and Atheists.

But this Essay refers only to the Latin Church and its descendants. Macaulay does not mention the Christian millions in Turkey, Russia, Greece, or Africa. During the long and most disgracefully bitter contests between the Roman Catholic Church and her revolted children, as she terms all Protestants, as well as during the almost equally violent contests among Protestants themselves, especially in Great Britain, the Eastern Christian Churches, though politically oppressed everywhere except in Russia, remained comparatively free from internal dissension.

Not much mutual hostility, despite their doctrinal differences,[1] actuated the African, Armenian, or Greek Christians against each other. This may perhaps be partly explained by the comparative absence of that intolerant, persecuting spirit so often displayed alike by Roman Catholics and Protestants when in political power: "If Eastern Christians have abdicated the glory of missionaries, they are exempt from the curse of proselytism, and they have (with some mournful examples to the contrary) been free from the still darker curse of persecution. A respectful reverence for every manifestation of religious feeling has withheld them from violent attacks on the rights of conscience, and led them to extend a kindly patronage to forms of faith most removed from their own. The gentle spirit of the Greek Fathers has granted to the heroes and sages of heathen antiquity a place in the Divine favour which was long denied in the West. Along the porticoes of Eastern

[1] "The Greek (or Russian) Church is more ceremonial than the Latin, but the Coptic (Egyptian) is more ceremonial than the Greek" (Dean Stanley's "Eastern Church," Lecture I.).

churches are to be seen portrayed on the walls the figures of Homer, Solon, Thucydides, Pythagoras, and Plato, as pioneers preparing the way for Christianity. . . . In Russia, where the power and the will to persecute exist more strongly, though proselytism is forbidden, yet the worship, not only of their own dissenters, but of Latins and Protestants, is protected as sacred." [1] Macaulay in this Essay attributes much of the success of Voltaire and other infidel writers to the disgust excited generally by religious bigotry, which in his time influenced both Roman Catholics and Protestants when enjoying political authority. Thus Macaulay says that "irreligion accidentally associated with philanthropy triumphed for a time over religion accidentally associated with political and social abuses." For Voltaire, while safe at Geneva, attacked with bitter sarcasm nearly all forms of Christianity, artfully insinuating that they equally encouraged or sanctioned intolerance, while Atheism was really the only friend to persecuted human reason. And in his lifetime appearances to some extent confirmed this view.

[1] Stanley's "Eastern Church," Lecture I.

Macaulay observes [1]: "It is due to Voltaire and his compeers to say that the real secret of their strength lay in the truth which was mingled with their errors, and in the generous enthusiasm which was hidden under their flippancy. While they assailed Christianity with a rancour and an unfairness disgraceful to men who called themselves philosophers, they yet had in far greater measure than their opponents that charity towards men of all classes and races which Christianity enjoins. . . . The really efficient weapons with which the philosophers assailed the evangelical faith were borrowed from the evangelical morality. The ethical and dogmatical parts of the gospel were unhappily turned against each other."

It was not till after Voltaire's death that men professing his opinions and almost deifying his memory obtained supreme power in France.

Now was the time to prove whether Atheism and tolerance were really such firm allies, for before this period avowed Atheism was only proclaimed in a few books, condemned and denounced by every political Government and

[1] P. 976.

religious denomination. But the policy of Atheism in power was precisely what the most sincerely religious might have predicted. An infidel Government not only repudiated all religious belief, but persecuted it with violence and cruelty.

The doctrines of Voltaire were apparently supreme, but his humane spirit had totally vanished. He probably would have been amazed and horrified had he lived to see his theories professed by men who violated human liberty of thought with the same cruelty which he had denounced with such keen eloquence all his life. As Macaulay observes, "to merely show reverence for religion was to incur the suspicion of disaffection," under the infidel French republic. Many priests were executed without trial, and thousands of others "fled from France to take sanctuary under the shade of hostile altars." But the savage triumph of Atheism in power hastened its own destruction, at least in a political sense. Napoleon, who suppressed the infidel republic, was an avowed Roman Catholic, and though hostile to the Pope for political reasons, had no desire to encourage

Atheism in any country. After his overthrow Latin Christianity in pacified Europe was situated nominally and geographically much the same as before the French Revolution.

In Spain, Italy, and Southern Germany Roman Catholicism revived when free from French infidel invaders. In France the restored Monarchy formally re-established Roman Catholicism, which, indeed, was always professed by Napoleon, though his treatment of the Pope had greatly irritated the Roman Catholic clergy against him throughout Europe.

At this period Macaulay closes his Essay, alluding forcibly, however, to the Roman Catholic revival in the present century, and remarking that it had been more successfully opposed latterly by infidelity than by any form of Protestantism. An earnest Protestant and an eminent Roman Catholic writer, Mr. Froude and Cardinal Newman, who have both survived Macaulay, mention the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Atheism; the former writes in alarm about what he terms the decline of Protestantism,[1] while Newman writes apprehensively

[1] "Short Studies on Great Subjects."

about the strength of modern infidelity when opposed to all Christian denominations.[1]

It is remarkable that Deism is seldom mentioned by Macaulay, Froude, or Newman. This form of faith, however, was apparently adopted by Hume, Gibbon, and many other enlightened men during the last century and the present. Macaulay in this Essay expressly declines examining the religious opinions of his own times. He dreads exciting "angry feelings" by doing so. Yet some readers will probably regret his objection; for Macaulay, in describing religious controversy, shows a calmness of judgment which, united to immense knowledge, would have made his opinions extremely valuable. He never shows that sneering, sarcastic spirit which animates Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and most other assailants of Christianity, and is completely free from the intense prejudices or vehement irritation which often distinguish the defenders of an assailed faith. In short, we

[1] "Infidelity itself is, I am obliged to say, in a more hopeful position as regards Christianity . . . the assailants of dogmatic truth have got the start of its adherents of whatever creed" ("Development of Christian Doctrine," p. 28.)

have Macaulay's vast learning, penetration, and eloquent style in detailing religious history without that excited enthusiasm and eager vehemence which his warmest admirers must own too often induce him to write unfairly in political narration.

His Essay on Ranke's work is indeed wonderfully instructive for its limits. Volumes might have been written upon the same subject without containing an equal amount of learning and varied information. In this Essay, also, there occurs that striking idea which of all Macaulay's speculative thoughts has perhaps most attracted public attention—the future possibility, if not likelihood, of " some traveller from New Zealand in the midst of a vast solitude sketching the ruins of St. Paul's from a broken arch of London Bridge." To Macaulay's historical mind and vivid imagination this idea, though vague and fanciful, would not seem altogether absurd; to a scholar so versed in the histories, even details, of the decline of former empires, the future ruin of one, flourishing around him, would only accord with those lessons of the past on which his mind loved to dwell. Though few men knew the

modern world better, as it existed round him in its social, moral, and political aspects, yet the past was seldom absent from his reflecting mind. Thus his classic taste and strong common sense united always represented former men and times as natural and real as if he had known them personally.[1] Like Shakespeare, he could contemplate, perhaps even realize, the dissolution of flourishing, powerful empires as calmly as the great poet imagines that of the world itself.

> "The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Leave not a wrack behind." ("The Tempest.")

In this Essay Macaulay briefly surveys the religious history of many European countries, and by frequent allusions to ancient, mediæval, and modern times displays an amount of knowledge, expressed in such easy and delightful language, that even dull or frivolous readers are attracted by its style, while the studious and

[1] "His thoughts were often for weeks together more in Latium and Attica than in Middlesex; to him Cicero was as real as Sir Robert Peel" (Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay," vol. ii. chap. xiv.).

profound would surely appreciate its intrinsic value.

Although so high an authority as Dean Milman does not consider Macaulay's Essays on Addison and Johnson equal to those on Bacon and Ranke's History, they are not only admirable in themselves, but most useful, especially to English readers. With Addison, Macaulay has much in common. They were both men of Liberal opinions and great literary taste. Each highly admired classic writings while they thoroughly appreciated modern civilization, with all its attendant blessings of justice and religious toleration. Both also knew how to blend instruction with amusement, for Addison's writings in the *Spectator*, Macaulay declares, were as popular as the works of Scott or Dickens, considering the scarcity of readers in the last century compared to the present. He compares Addison's harmless wit and humour with those of his eminent contemporaries, Dean Swift and Voltaire. The gloomy bitterness of the former and the constant mockery and sarcasm of the latter please Macaulay's dis-

cerning mind less than the mingled wit, shrewdness, piety, and thorough conscientiousness which so distinguish Addison's writings and character. Macaulay, however, probably praises him too far in saying that, except Shakespeare and Cervantes, no one has drawn more vivid, lifelike portraits of human character; for surely Sir Walter Scott, Miss Austen, and other writers have excelled him in this respect, and Macaulay himself, in his Essay on Miss Burney (Madame D'Arblay), actually names Miss Austen as next to Shakespeare in correctly and minutely delineating imaginary characters.

Macaulay is probably more just in praising the constant aim of Addison to improve all he knew, and did not know, by his consistent conduct and the moral excellence of his writings. The power of ridicule Addison possessed in boundless measure, as Macaulay observes, but instead of abusing it as Swift and Voltaire each did in their different ways, Addison devoted this talent to the best of purposes. Living at a time when legal abuses and religious intolerance, though diminishing, were still prevalent, and without many advantages which his posterity

possess, Addison's ideas, feelings, and wishes are yet worthy of the present age. His "Reflections in Westminster Abbey," as well as his whole history of Sir Roger de Coverley, reveal the same spirit of conscientious wisdom, and a mind alike free from scepticism or superstition. To these writings Macaulay draws special attention, and concludes with remarks on Addison's death, which so worthily closed an exemplary and useful life.

Yet though Macaulay greatly admires and appreciates Addison, he appears even more interested in his literary successor, Dr. Johnson. Both in his Essays and Miscellaneous Writings he examines Johnson's life and works with great attention, and at considerable length. To Boswell's celebrated biography he gives the highest praise, while sharply noticing the biographer's many weaknesses and oddities. But in Dr. Johnson Macaulay cannot but recognize a man of "vigorous and acute" mind. Even when "provokingly unjust" he "well deserves to be studied." The "Lives of the Poets" Macaulay prefers of all his works, declaring

that they are as interesting as any novel. He sympathizes with Johnson in admiring the classic writers, and in his desire to elevate English literary taste. His high spirit, firmness, and generosity Macaulay fully acknowledges, though he apparently prefers the more mild and gentle disposition of Addison. In political and historical opinions, however, Johnson and Macaulay are much opposed, and by Johnson's "provoking injustice" Macaulay probably means his "Life of Milton," against which the "hounds of Whiggism" rushed in full cry.[1] In literary research, toil, and interest, however, Macaulay certainly resembled him, for both eminently succeeded in rendering their works, even on grave subjects, interesting as well as instructive.

Macaulay, perhaps, hardly does justice to Johnson's edition of Shakespeare. The admirable Preface, he admits, contains some good passages, yet considers it not in his best style. When Johnson undertook this labour he found the great poet strangely undervalued even by those calling themselves his admirers. Like his prose contemporary Bacon, Shakespeare was far from

[1] Cunningham's Preface to Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."

being appreciated, even in his own country, till many generations had passed away. He was apparently more admired in the reigns of James I. and his son Charles than for many subsequent years, the Puritans and Independents in Cromwell's time generally condemning and disliking him. This disapproval of Shakespeare was probably not confined to merely the ignorant and fanatical. Walter Scott describes in "Woodstock" an Independent soldier vehemently abusing Shakespeare in language both amusing and ridiculous.

"Here is the King and High Priest of vices and follies. On thee, William Shakespeare, I charge whate'er of vices, lawless idleness, and immodest folly hath defiled the land since thy day. Away with him, men of England, to Tophet, with his accursed book," etc.[1]

He also makes his republican hero, Colonel Everard, a man of excellent character, judgment, and education, blame Shakespeare in language which would surely be thought unjust at the present day.

"I cannot think these fine poems are an useful

[1] Chap. iii.

study, especially for the youth of either sex, in which bloodshed is pointed out as the chief occupation of the men and intrigue as the sole employment of the women." [1]

Milton certainly appreciated his grand genius—"Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child"; [2] but probably few of his religious or political partisans agreed with him. When Johnson, however, took Shakespeare in hand he found he had not only to explain but "to defend" [3] the author. Subsequent history has proved that the chief defence required was that his works should be known to people who were free from religious and political prejudices.

Although Macaulay calls Johnson's edition of Shakespeare "slovenly and worthless," it probably had the useful effect at least of directing fresh attention to England's greatest writer, at a time when his works were but slowly rising in public estimation after a long period of neglect and misconstruction. Johnson and Macaulay, therefore, were alike nobly employed, trying in the eighteenth and nine-

[1] Chap. xxv.
[2] "Allegro."
[3] Johnson's Preface to "Shakespeare."

teenth centuries to revive general interest in the undervalued masterpieces of England's greatest writers, Bacon and Shakespeare. Yet Macaulay in his works seldom makes quotations from Shakespeare, while admitting his "supreme and universal excellence," and that "he has had neither equal nor second." [1]

Of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Macaulay prefers those of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. Those of Milton and Addison he scarcely mentions; of the former he doubtless disapproved, and was probably dissatisfied with the latter, for certainly Johnson hardly does the excellent moralist justice. Yet while approving Johnson's "Life of Dryden," Macaulay also wrote an Essay upon him as well as upon Addison, which may be compared with those of Johnson. Dryden's energetic, spirited style, and Addison's calm good sense, evidently pleased each of their literary critics; but of the two comparatively modern essayists Macaulay certainly possessed and showed far more learning and variety of knowledge.

This superiority may be well explained by

[1] "Essays on Mitford's Greece, and on Madame D'Arblay."

remembering Macaulay's vast literary advantages over Johnson in the different times in which they lived. Between the lives of these great writers the progress of literature and general knowledge had been vast indeed, almost sufficiently so, perhaps, to gratify the calm yet daring ambition of Bacon himself. Johnson, on the whole, admires Dryden more than Macaulay does; he warmly praises his translation of Virgil, to which the latter makes rather scornful allusion. Johnson examines Dryden's writings in a critical yet friendly spirit; Macaulay cannot resist comparing him to his disadvantage with his favourite, Milton. Johnson's criticisms were written more for the learned few than for the reading many; Macaulay's would suit both classes almost equally. In Johnson's time Dryden's and Addison's classic knowledge was comparatively rare and valuable; in Macaulay's day both were surpassed in classic requirements by many who yet were much their inferiors in natural genius and refinement. While Johnson, with his usual shrewd intelligence, examines Addison's and Dryden's thoughts and words with close, somewhat exclusive, attention, Macaulay varies these

same subjects by learned, yet interesting, allusions to modern as well as to classic literature.

All Johnson's literary knowledge Macaulay apparently possessed, with vast additions which the former had never the means of acquiring. Johnson often compares Addison and Dryden to other British poets and writers, to Pope especially, while Macaulay introduces Italian and Spanish authors also, for comparison or illustration. Johnson's "Lives" were eagerly studied by comparatively few readers, more inclined to admire than to criticize severely; indeed, it was by the special request of some writers of his own time that Johnson, in advanced years, undertook this work, his last and best. Macaulay from his own inclination wrote for a world of critics, numerous, fastidious, and enlightened. Johnson would have gratified English readers chiefly, if not solely; Macaulay might fairly hope to interest all educated foreigners also, for in knowledge and appreciation of French and Italian writers he far surpassed Johnson. The latter is content to compare Addison and Dryden to other English poets, with most of whom his studious mind was familiar; Macaulay,

besides knowing them as well as Johnson did, ranges over educated Europe for purposes of illustration and comparison. Thus he has Johnson's foundation of classic learning and knowledge of the best English works of and before his day, in addition to a vast amount of foreign, American, and comparatively modern English literature. This superiority of information Macaulay owes, indeed, partly to his enlightened times, so infinitely more favourable to a young literary man than Johnson's period, but also to his rare ability and judgment, enabling him to utilize every advantage.

While, therefore, Johnson's Essays on Addison and Dryden are rather longer, more laboured, and in some respects more profound, Macaulay's are not only more interesting, but are on the whole more instructive. He is, indeed, far more excursive than Johnson, who dwells steadily upon his subject, enriching it with his own wise remarks and apt allusions to other writers; whereas Macaulay takes a literary voyage of discovery throughout all ages and countries, never forgetting his primary object of enlightening and amusing his readers at the same time.

In his Essays on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration, and on Lord Byron, Macaulay proves how thoroughly he appreciated the talents of all these different writers, and yet how keenly he detested both their gross immorality and refined licentiousness. He shows all that scrupulous purity of mind which some Puritan zealots of former times thought incompatible with love for the fine arts, and an admiration for beauty of language and style which some grave personages have often associated with depraved or frivolous thoughts. In the case of Byron Macaulay recognizes a man of education and talent, whose career might, to some extent, have justified those anti-literary fanatics who contemned nearly all literature, poetry especially, as likely to allure men's minds from the study of that one Book which in their estimation, like the Koran was said to have been in that of the Caliph Omar, contained all that mankind should know.[1]

Macaulay remarks that Byron showed little knowledge of character in his descriptions—" he had only two in all his works, and even these he could not exhibit dramatically."

[1] Gibbon's " Decline and Fall," vol. vi.

"Lord Byron could exhibit only one man and one woman—a man proud, moody, cynical, with despair on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection; a woman all softness and gentleness, loving to caress and be caressed, but capable of being transformed by passion into a tigress." [1]

Yet he proved decisively how well he knew the taste of the living world of readers, for Macaulay owns that "the interest which he excited during his life is without a parallel in literary history."

It is very remarkable that a man who so well understood other people's fancies and inclinations, and gratified them so successfully, should not have shown in his imaginary personages that knowledge of human nature which he evidently possessed. Yet it is surely fortunate that he did not show in his writings any such knowledge, for he probably would not have used it for any useful purpose, like Shakespeare, Addison, Scott, and Dickens. In different ways, and during different periods,

[1] P. 341.

these popular writers alike succeeded in making fictitious literature the firm yet attractive ally of virtuous thoughts and aspirations, instead of degrading it into their insidious enemy. But Lord Byron, either from utter indifference in this respect or from gloomy misanthropy, did little moral good to any of his admirers, who, Macaulay observes with keen severity, "drew from his poetry a system of ethics compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the two great commandments were to hate your neighbour and to love your neighbour's wife."

In the Essay on the Comic Dramatists, Macaulay, while strongly condemning the works of Wycherley, Congreve, etc., apparently thinks they never attracted the public mind and taste like those of Byron. For none possessed the same brilliancy of style or depth of thought. Yet probably Byron's ideas, expressed in elegant, refined poetry, did more harm to young minds than the coarser language of such writers as Wycherley, etc. The eminent statesman, orator, and philosopher Edmund Burke, indeed, says [1]

[1] "Essay on the French Revolution."

that "vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness." This assertion may perhaps be questioned, but surely the more gross or repulsive vice appears, the less attractive, and therefore the less dangerous, it will be to weak persons.

To some people, Byron's polished refinement made the same vicious thoughts and principles comparatively alluring, which the equally depraved but coarser style of Wycherley and Congreve would have rendered odious and repulsive. When evil ideas or bad principles are adorned with every charm of expression with which perverted human genius can invest them, they surely become more generally dangerous, owing to those very beauties or excellences of style and language which should convey elevation and purity of thought. In every remark on Byron, Macaulay shows the keenest appreciation of all that is admirable in him as a poet, while he evidently regrets, like a true philanthropist, that he cared nothing to improve the minds and characters of his admirers either by example or precept.

In his Essay on Warren Hastings, Macaulay

gives a brief yet powerful sketch of Edmund Burke. Although Burke differed so much from him in politics, yet they possessed in common an energy, eloquence, and intense earnestness which, had they been contemporaries, would probably have brought them together either in firm alliance or vehement opposition. A similar zeal for the public good, general benevolence, and hatred of all falsehood and cruelty, are revealed in the writings and speeches of each. Yet Macaulay, though he often mentions Burke, has no separate Essay on him, while he probably studied his works more attentively than the novels of Miss Burney, about whom he writes at some length. After praising her best novel, "Evelina," Macaulay probably surprises many readers by comparing Miss Austen's homely, sensible novels with the great works of Shakespeare. He believes that in keen and careful discrimination between imaginary characters, which resemble yet differ from each other, Miss Austen approached "nearest to the manner of the great master."

Though Macaulay may prove this to some extent, he yet owns that all Miss Austen's

characters are "commonplace," whereas many of Shakespeare's creations are both above and below that designation in its moral, social, and intellectual sense. If, therefore, a novelist were able to discriminate as accurately between characters which are not commonplace as between those which are, while describing all with equal truth to life and nature, such a writer would probably resemble Shakespeare more than Miss Austen did, even on Macaulay's own principles.

Such a writer is surely his own illustrious countryman, Sir Walter Scott. .. In his best works there are numerous "commonplace" characters, but associated and contrasted, as in Shakespeare, with others totally different, and by comparison with whom they are so considered. Miss Austen describes this class of persons only, whereas Shakespeare and Scott describe them with the same ease as they do others whom Miss Austen never introduces. Yet Macaulay may be said to praise even Shakespeare's knowledge of character too highly when declaring he had neither equal nor *second*. Without depreciating his supreme merit,

his warmest admirers may surely allow that Scott closely approaches him in the most profound knowledge of human nature ever imparted to one man's mind by the universal Creator.

It seems clear from Macaulay's singular comparison of Miss Austen to Shakespeare, as well as from his own admissions,[1] that he rather undervalued Walter Scott, and was by no means very familiar with his works. In Scott's "Antiquary," "Rob Roy," "Abbot," etc., we find some commonplace or ordinary persons, "such as we meet every day" as Macaulay says, mingled either with historical or rare and exceptional characters. Such people, for instance, as Andrew Fairservice, the Mucklebackits, etc., are probably as common in Scotland as ever, but they are involved and contrasted with others of a totally different kind. So with Shakespeare, we find ordinary and comic characters mingled with heroes and villains, yet all natural and true to life. Whether Miss Austen could have even slightly resembled Shakespeare in this respect will never be known, for she never described any save rather common-

[1] Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay."

place characters, and assuredly had a wonderful and acknowledged success in their most accurate delineation.

Although Macaulay's most interesting Essays chiefly refer to English literature, his eminent friend Dean Milman more admires those on Barère and Mirabeau, in which he considers "Macaulay's judgment on the acts and men of the French Revolution are very striking." [1] Yet even his genius cannot render that dreadful period an attractive subject, and it has been rather avoided apparently by modern poets and novelists, despite the interesting characters, stirring incidents, and most important events connected with it.

Both Lord Lytton and Charles Dickens, however, attempted sketches of that time,[2] the former introducing Robespierre occasionally, but evidently preferring to describe his own imaginary characters, for, unlike Scott, he apparently feels less interest in historical than fictitious personages by showing far less power in their description. Dickens's striking and

[1] "Memoir of Lord Macaulay."

[2] "Zanoni," and "Tale of Two Cities."

pathetic story mentions no real characters of importance, and the most amiable and interesting persons in this story are English people. Macaulay, however, in these two Essays, shows perhaps less interest than might have been expected in the question whether a monarchy or a republic is best suited to the French nation. He neither denounces the Revolution like Burke, nor does he show much enthusiasm for liberty in France. He apparently has little sympathy with any of the rival French parties, monarchist, Bonapartist, or republican—probably the most moderate of the last named had his preference. His long description of Barère's extraordinary success in obtaining power under each political faction in turn seems incredible were the narration not confirmed by history.

The sketch of the celebrated republican Mirabeau is much shorter, though Macaulay takes more interest in him; yet despite his great energy, talents, and occasionally good intentions, Macaulay has little esteem for either his public or private character. Dean Milman says that Macaulay's most important Essays are those referring to British history. This

subject, from his first youthful Essay to the last volume he wrote, evidently roused and interested him more than any other. He reverts to it rather remarkably in an imaginary conversation between the poets Cowley and Milton, during which the execution of Charles I. is discussed with great animation from the Royalist and Republican points of view.

Milton always possesses a fascination for Macaulay; but it is the sublime poet, the ardent advocate of liberty, not the implacable politician, that Macaulay so deeply venerates. Accordingly in this discussion Macaulay imbues Milton, not only with his own political sentiments, but also with his own considerate feelings. Macaulay's Milton is, in fact, what the author of "Paradise Lost" should have been consistently with the spirit of that immortal poem. It is surely both interesting and instructive, however, to compare Milton's real words with those so generously attributed to him by his enthusiastic admirer of the nineteenth century.

Macaulay represents Milton saying to Cowley: "For King Charles's private virtues they are beside the question. There is no good man who

shall make us his slaves. If he break his word to his people is it a sufficient defence that he keeps it to his own companions? I will not now defend all that I may heretofore have written. For the execution of King Charles I will not now undertake to defend it. From all that I know I think that the death of King Charles hath more hindered than advanced the liberties of England. It was a deed most odious to the people, and not only to your party but to many among ourselves," etc. But what does the Milton of reality reply to Salmasius about the King's execution, and in the "Iconoclast"? "What the devil is it to you what the English do among themselves? What would you have, pragmatical puppy? What would you be at? If you say that Charles died piously, holily, and at ease, you may remember that his grandmother, Mary, Queen of Scots, an infamous woman, died on a scaffold with as much outward appearance of piety, sanctity, and constancy as he did. . . . The only grief is that the head was not struck off to the best advantage and commodity of those who held it by the hair. . . . Such a

solemn, and for many ages unexampled, act of due punishment was no mockery of justice, but a most grateful and well-pleasing sacrifice," etc.

From this comparison it seems clear how different were the sentiments of a real lover of freedom living in England during a peaceful time, and those of a man who, though professing similar views, was apparently excited and irritated beyond all bounds of Christian charity by the furious passions of his distracted period.

The spirit of civil war, with its extraordinary bitterness and violence, reveals itself in most of Milton's prose works, except the eloquent "Areopagitica," which is comparatively, if not wholly, free from it. Macaulay, however, through this conversation delights in ascribing to Milton his own views about Charles I.'s execution, which he expresses at even greater length in his Essay on Hallam and in the first chapter of his History of England, where he terms it "not only a crime but an error" of the victorious republicans. Yet he does not exonerate Charles from most of the charges brought against him, but strongly

condemns his execution, more because of its extreme imprudence in a political sense than for its criminality in a moral one.

Although such may be the calm opinion of some modern English Liberals, it may be doubted if Milton or many of the republicans of his day would ever have entertained it. The chief objects of Milton's "Iconoclast," "Defensio Populi," and "Tenure of Kings" are to prove that a king, who deceived his subjects and levied an unjust war against them, may rightly be tried, and if found guilty, executed by his former subjects, who are absolved from allegiance and transformed into his lawful judges by the crimes of their deposed ruler. Macaulay, who believes and confirms most of the charges against the king, admits that his execution was a political blunder, by its transferring the claims of a guilty, unpopular king to his heir, who, having made no enemies, was therefore more dangerous to the new republic. In the interest of the Commonwealth, therefore, Macaulay chiefly blames Charles's condemnation, as his execution evidently alien-

ated the public mind from the new Government. This view he makes Milton express in his conversation with Cowley.

The grand object of Milton's writings on this subject was to advocate the justice of regicide as a precious inalienable popular right in the case of all kings acting as Charles was alleged to have done. In most of these allegations Macaulay is as firm a believer as Milton. Yet Macaulay pronounces Charles's execution both a crime and an error. Milton, unless he changed his nature as well as his principles, could hardly have believed it either one or the other. But during this imaginary conversation, as in other places, where Macaulay mentions him Milton appears a very different man from what his prose writings reveal.

In extensive learning, profound thought, and eloquent writing, Milton and Macaulay rather resemble each other; but in charity of feeling and consideration, or even courtesy of expression towards opponents, they are wholly unlike. This difference is partly owing to the peculiar periods of their lives—civil war and profound domestic

peace—but probably it is still more attributable to their respective hearts and tempers.

Milton explores classic and sacred history with great industry to maintain and justify his favourite principle of regicide. According to him, not only Irish Roman Catholics and Irish Presbyterians, but also his own fellow-countrymen, if Royalists, almost deserved to be classed with the wicked idolaters denounced in Scripture. He even shows this implacable spirit in Book vii. of "Paradise Lost," which proves that neither age, blindness, nor political adversity had softened his heart, but that he still viewed even fellow-Englishmen with a horror, scorn, and utter detestation like what David expresses in the Psalms against the avowed enemies of God.

Milton, after deploring his having fallen on evil days (meaning the restoration of the monarchy), thus implores the Muse Urania :—

"But drive far off the barbarous dissonance of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard,
In Rodopé, where woods and rocks had ears,
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice, nor could the muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores,
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream."

The drunken Royalists whom he here alludes to were men probably like the Lucios and Gratianos of Shakespeare, the Wildrakes, Bellendens, and Peverils of Scott, whom those great writers—unrivalled in knowledge of human nature—described with faults, vices, and good qualities combined, but whom Milton mentions as almost beyond the pale of humanity. Macaulay's imagination, however, seems to delight in ascribing to Milton a spirit of moderation and courtesy towards opponents which he probably felt himself, but which Milton's works certainly never reveal.

In examining Mitford's "History of Greece" Macaulay displays that ardent love of Greek literature which he and many other great men during the nineteenth century have expressed so warmly. Notwithstanding the number of eminent British and foreign writers with whom this enlightened century has made many people familiar, the grand thoughts of Homer, Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato were perhaps never so admired, praised, and explained, even by statesmen, to general readers, as during the last century Lords Derby and Lytton, besides Mr. Gladstone,

have both either translated or quoted classic authors with more or less success, but none has been so enthusiastic or eloquent in their praise as Macaulay. In this Essay on Mitford, and also that on the Athenian orators, his admiration for Greek literature is irrepressible. He even recalls his early schooldays with a fondness and pleasure very different to Shakespeare's typical schoolboy, " whining " and " creeping like snail unwillingly to school," who still, however, represents a sufficiently numerous class. To Macaulay, on the contrary, " the old schoolroom—the dog-eared grammar—the tears so often shed and so quickly dried," etc., are among what he calls the " endearing associations of childhood," but it is doubtful if such feelings are very general, even among the learned of the present day.

Shakespeare apparently had very different recollections of his early education, and Sir Walter Scott disliked his school-life extremely. But Macaulay evidently enjoyed his classical studies as if he had actually heard Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, or Herodotus speak with all the charm of their wisdom, knowledge, and fancy.

In fact, classic times and characters were so like existing realities to him that the possible ruin and change of the empires and political systems of his own day seemed only the natural continuation of former events. Thus he again expresses a similar idea about the decline of England in his Essay on Mitford to his celebrated New Zealander sketching the ruins of London. After a panegyric on the ancient glories of Athens, he says that her influence and renown, derived chiefly from her imperishable literature, will remain " when the sceptre shall have passed away from England, and when travellers from distant regions shall in vain labour to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief," etc.

In appreciating Greek literature Mr. Mitford, a laborious writer, utterly fails to satisfy his accomplished and enthusiastic reviewer.[1] Yet perhaps Macaulay goes too far in declaring that from Greek literature, directly or indirectly, have

[1] " Of the indifference which Mr. Mitford shows on this subject I will not speak, for I cannot speak with fairness. It is a subject on which I love to forget the accuracy of a judge in the veneration of a worshipper and the gratitude of a child," etc.

sprung all the noblest creations of the human mind, and that " to it we owe the comprehension of Bacon, the wit of Butler, and the supreme excellence of Shakespeare." Bacon was certainly a great classic scholar, but the author of " Hudibras " shows very little of such knowledge, and his mode and place of education are unknown [1]; while Shakespeare, according to his literary contemporary Ben Jonson, knew " little Latin and less Greek." Macaulay, however, eloquently declares that " all the triumphs of truth and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and in every age, have been the triumphs of Athens," and in this opinion he is apparently joined by his eminent literary contemporary, Lord Lytton, despite their different politics.

In the Essay on Frederick the Great of Prussia, Macaulay dwells much on the character, talents, and errors of Voltaire. The influence which this wonderful writer acquired over parts of the Continent, and also over some minds in England, is to this day a matter of surprise to both theologians and philosophers. His chief opponents, among whom are many wise and

[1] Johnson's "Life of Butler."

excellent people, usually condemn his works with sincere dread and horror; his admirers, on the other hand, often praise him as one of the greatest moral benefactors to mankind whom the modern world has seen. But Macaulay when mentioning Voltaire in this Essay, and in those on Addison and Ranke's History, seems remarkably calm and judicious. He, in fact, admires his genius and humanity without being either attracted or irritated by his atheistical views or extraordinary spirit of mockery. He estimates Voltaire with a steady fairness and cool judgment which occasionally fail him when describing characters he strongly likes or dislikes in political history.

In many respects Macaulay is peculiarly fitted to encounter this great writer, especially when both address accomplished, unprejudiced, or sceptical readers. Macaulay himself possesses precisely the intellectual, tolerant mind and comprehensive views which Voltaire professed to admire and impart, while completely free from both his personal vanity and constant sarcasm. It is likely that Voltaire never had the good fortune to meet a man like Macaulay, but was

chiefly known either to scoffing Atheists, to ignorant admiring followers, or to angry and offended theologians. His character and opinions, therefore, were probably viewed with high admiration and unreasoning confidence, or with the most profound and vehement abhorrence. In Macaulay he would have met his equal in philanthropy and tolerant views, his superior in learning and personal modesty, while possessing a freedom from religious prejudices so true and so complete that, while a steady Christian himself, he could yet appreciate all that was good even in a most determined enemy to his own faith.

Voltaire, who has provoked the mildest divines to anger, who has aroused or confirmed in the sneering and sceptical the most hardened contempt for religion of any kind, who has, in short, aroused the most opposite feelings imaginable in different minds upon the most important of all subjects—has no power to excite Macaulay or disturb his judgment, despite his enthusiastic nature. On the contrary, Macaulay describes him with calm, close attention, "nothing extenuates, nor sets down aught in malice." He

does ample justice to his humanity and sympathy with all cases of suffering, yet instead of being attracted by his unscrupulous sarcasm which spared nothing in this world or the next, Macaulay censures it with exquisite brilliancy, judgment, and truth.

"Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants who had never been moved by the wailing or cursing of millions turned pale at his name. Principles unassailed by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, and the most august Institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. . . . Voltaire is the prince of buffoons; his merriment is without disguise or restraint; he venerated nothing. Neither in the masterpieces of art, nor in the purest examples of virtue, neither in the Great First Cause, nor in the awful enigma of the grave, could he see anything but subjects for drollery. The more

solemn and august the theme, the more monkey-like were his grimacing and chattering." [1]

Those inclined either to blame Macaulay too much for undoubted partiality, or to underrate his judgment by fancying his brilliancy superficial, should study his estimate of Voltaire in the three different Essays which notice him. It proves that Macaulay, when his mind was not excited by enthusiasm, possessed a discrimination which has seldom been equalled and perhaps never surpassed. Thus he can appreciate Voltaire's talents and generosity without being in the least captivated by his philosophy or affected by his principles. In a standard work on English literature Macaulay is styled inferior in judgment to Mr. Hallam.[2] The latter is certainly more calm, as well as more dry and deliberate, in style and language. But none of his three Histories have surpassed Macaulay's Essays in pronouncing the most sound and truthful judgment on an immense variety of characters, ancient and modern, throughout the civilized world. It is as the British historian

[1] "Essays on Frederick the Great and Addison."

[2] Shaw's "Manual of English Literature."

chiefly that Macaulay's partialities seem to affect both his temper and judgment; as an essayist he is usually as accurate and profound as he is brilliant and entertaining.

In his Essay on the life and times of Lord Burleigh, Macaulay expresses great admiration for "England's Elizabeth." An ardent friend to liberty of thought, word, and deed, Macaulay yet feels a rather surprising admiration for this most despotic princess; her tyrannical temper and singular vanity he slightly notices, while praising her extreme sagacity. Macaulay, while admitting her almost absolute power, declares that some persons do not sufficiently consider that this power she derived from the willing obedience of her subjects; but he can only mean a portion of them, though perhaps a majority, for some, among whom were persons of education and position, always viewed her as a tyrant, and with reason. Yet Macaulay makes the remarkable statement that the English in her time were a free people; they had not the show of outward freedom, he owns, but they had the reality. He can surely mean chiefly the Episcopal Protestants acknowledging her eccle-

siastical supremacy, for he well knew that English Roman Catholics in her reign were so far from being free that they were scarcely safe from persecution, which some, indeed, incurred for slight offences. Even the English Dissenters had little right to call themselves free in her reign.

So jealous was Elizabeth about her authority that she forbade and prevented the Presbyterian champion, John Knox, preaching in her dominions, owing to his proclaimed aversion to female sovereignty, though doubtless numbers of her Protestant subjects longed to hear this celebrated preacher.

The constant arrests and occasional executions of persons accused of high treason in her reign, against whom the charge was not always quite proved, also render Macaulay's assertion very questionable as to the real freedom of Elizabeth's subjects. This queen, however, was so popular with the majority that she and her ministers enjoyed immense power without much opposition from the luckless minority, whose complaints would scarcely have been allowed free utterance.

It seems evident from both history and Macaulay's sketch that Lord Burleigh was much

more the queen's obedient minister in many ways than an independent statesman. All his great qualities of mind were devoted to her service, while he only ventured to recommend a " tolerant policy to his mistress " as long as he dared do so without "hazarding her favour." Yet Macaulay greatly admires him as well as the queen despite their extremely arbitrary system of government. The reason is, apparently, that Elizabeth and Burleigh were most popular with the English people, the country flourished and prospered under their rule, and Macaulay, acknowledging these facts, restrains, or rather moderates, his own feelings in a way which might surprise some Roman Catholic or Nonconformist readers, who have little cause to admire Elizabeth's reign. He closes this Essay saying he has no space for describing the number of illustrious persons who distinguished this period, although he had intended doing so. This is much to be regretted, as such a description would have displayed his highest powers. He thus abandoned his intention of describing Shakespeare, Raleigh, Walsingham, etc.; this Essay, therefore, is merely a brief political sketch,

which, though full of information, is neither so brilliant nor interesting as many others on less attractive subjects.

The most remarkable part of his Study on Mr. Gladstone's Essay on Church and State is at the close, when describing the Irish Protestant Church in terms of keen censure. Macaulay calls it a Church reprobated by four-fifths of the nation, established and maintained by force alone, and which, as a missionary one, had utterly failed, etc. Yet after expressing most of the arguments since used with such decisive effect before and during that Church's disestablishment, he leaves the subject with words of solemn warning, also often used by some of its defeated supporters :—

"The world is full of institutions which though they ought never to have been set up, yet having been set up ought not to be rudely pulled down, and it is often wise in practice to be content with the mitigation of an abuse which, looking at it in the abstract, we might feel impatient to destroy."

It is difficult, therefore, to say, had Macaulay survived, if he would have advocated or opposed the great measure which has so agitated and

divided public opinion in Ireland. He says, borrowing an expression of Bacon's, that there is no want of "light," but a great want of "dry light" about Mr. Gladstone's mind and writings. This opinion has been often expressed by his political opponents, of whom Macaulay was one when writing this Essay, for Mr. Gladstone was then (1838-9) "the rising hope of stern, unbending Tories." Macaulay, however, recognizes, even in this early work of Mr. Gladstone, that remarkably earnest, laborious, yet enthusiastic spirit which that statesman so consistently devoted to all the different subjects that engaged his mind during a most eventful life.

Of the two Essays on William Pitt (afterwards Lord Chatham), the first was written ten years before the other (1834-44); the rise of this great statesman and orator under George II to the post of Premier, despite the King's dislike to him, is told with great animation. Even his appearance, manner of speaking, and gestures are described as if by an eye-witness. Yet Macaulay is probably too severe in this Essay upon the English Tory country gentlemen—"ponderous fox-hunters fat with Staffordshire or

Devonshire ale, men who drank to the King over the water, and believed that all the fundholders were Jews, men whose religion consisted in hating the Dissenters," etc. This last sarcasm was undeserved by some, to whom it seems applied, though doubtless many remained sincere Jacobites while the banished Royal Family survived, and Macaulay himself, in his subsequent Essay on Pitt, mentions the first two Georges in language almost worthy of a Jacobite, though for political reasons he cordially supports them.[1]

The glorious conquests and triumphs of England during Pitt's administration, the fame and popularity of the Great Commoner, as he was often called, and the confidence reposed in him by all classes and creeds of Englishmen, are eloquently described in this first Essay on Pitt, which leaves him "in the zenith of his glory." The second chiefly comprises his political career after George II's death, when Premier under his grandson, George III. This prince, Macaulay says, was the first of his family

[1] "They had neither those hereditary rights which have often supplied the defect of merit, nor those personal qualities which have often supplied the defect of title."

who was really popular with the British nation generally; and during the early part of his reign, with Pitt as Prime Minister, Macaulay describes Great Britain as enjoying almost unequalled prosperity. In this Essay Macaulay makes many important reflections, and among them a very able estimate of the different positions and uses of Whigs and Tories in the British Empire. After stating that these rival parties both represent great principles, essential to the welfare of a nation, he proceeds in language more impartial than usual with him: "One is in an especial manner the guardian of liberty, the other of order. One is the moving power, the other the steadying power of the State. One is the sail, without which society would make no progress; the other the ballast, without which there would be small safety in a tempest."

It was Pitt's good fortune to see both these parties regard him with respect and confidence. "Whigs and Tories spoke with equal enthusiasm of his talents and services." But, as Macaulay says, he lived to see a great change, both in the prosperity of the empire and in his own popularity. Soon after his elevation to the peerage

as Earl of Chatham the British colonies in North America revolted. Chatham had opposed many of the measures which produced their discontent; but when their independence was about to be acknowledged, in which recognition the French eagerly joined, his high spirit made him protest against it, which was the last effort of his political life. Macaulay describes his last speech in the House of Lords, during which he fainted, was carried out insensible, and died a few weeks afterwards.

His conduct at this time has been differently estimated by different writers; Macaulay thinks his opposing American independence inconsistent with his previous declaration, that it was impossible to conquer the revolted colonies. But his last oration, uttered almost in a dying state, the spirit and energy which his excited countenance expressed at that moment, and the striking effect of his fainting in such a place, and at such a time, denouncing with his last breath the dismemberment of an empire he had long faithfully ruled, produced a great impression on the public mind. Macaulay, while censuring some of his political acts, declares

that few statesmen have left behind a more stainless, and none a more splendid, name.

In the Essay (written in 1859) on Chatham's second son, William Pitt, the young Prime Minister of twenty-one, Macaulay recognizes one whose literary taste must have resembled his own.

"It may be doubted whether any scholar has ever, at twenty, had a more solid and profound knowledge of the two great tongues of the old civilized world. To modern literature Pitt paid comparatively little attention. With a few of the best English writers he was intimate, particularly with Shakespeare and Milton. The debate in Pandemonium ["Paradise Lost"] was, as it well deserved to be, one of his favourite passages, and his early friends used to talk, long after his death, of the just emphasis and the melodious cadence with which they had heard him recite the incomparable speech of Belial."

He admired the classics and Milton's poetry above all other books. He knew and cared less about modern languages or literature. His great abilities and splendid oratory Macaulay praises, while censuring his indifference to and extraordinary contempt for the literary men of

his time. During his political authority several illustrious Englishmen whose great works made them justly precious to the nation which he governed were suffering from illness and poverty. Dr. Johnson's end was now approaching, as was that of the mild and virtuous poet Cowper; yet towards neither did Pitt apparently show much kindness or favour. Even the excellent divine Dr. Paley, whose works were generally studied by and recommended to the rising youth of England, was left unnoticed and uncared for by this "all-powerful minister." [1]

Macaulay compares the generosity of the Tory Edmund Burke to the poet Crabbe, and of the Whig Lord Grey to Walter Scott, with Pitt's conduct towards Johnson, Cowper, and Paley, with whose characters and works he must, to some extent, have been familiar. Artists and painters, Macaulay declares, were as contemptuously treated by Pitt as men of

[1] "All the theological works of all the numerous bishops whom Pitt made and translated are not, when put together, worth fifty pages of the 'Horæ Paulinæ,' of the 'Natural Theology,' or of the 'View of the Evidences of Christianity.' But on Paley the all-powerful minister never bestowed the smallest benefice."

letters.[1] Macaulay while mentioning this fact cannot apparently account for it. Yet it seems difficult to believe how a man of Pitt's profound learning and high principle could have so grossly neglected some of the best and most illustrious men of his time. Macaulay admits his "great talents" and "honest intentions" while attributing to him conduct which seems unworthy of either. He makes special reference to Pitt's government of Ireland, saying that could he have done the justice he wished to Irish Roman Catholics the '98 rebellion might have been averted, and that Irish Catholics were "thrown into the hands of the Jacobins," a party whom Pitt opposed with all his energy.

Macaulay's brief assertion on this important subject might surely be misconstrued, since he terms that extraordinary revolt "a third great rising of the Irishry against the Englishry, a rising not less formidable than the risings of 1641 and 1689." But, unlike these two

[1] "Artists Pitt treated as contemptuously as writers. For painting he did simply nothing. It may be confidently affirmed that no ruler, whose abilities and attainments would bear any comparison with his, has ever shown such cold disdain for what is excellent in arts and letters."

"risings," which to some extent resembled one another, the '98 movement differed essentially from previous, though not from subsequent, Irish rebellions. It was first planned and directed by members of "the Englishry" themselves; most of the leaders and the ablest of them were of Saxon blood and Protestant faith.[1]

Yet it would be a mistake to consider this rebellion a Protestant movement. It was mainly supported by Roman Catholics, though headed chiefly by Protestants, with whom they had little sympathy, except detestation of British rule, which alone caused their temporary alliance. The few existing Roman Catholic noblemen and men of property were strongly against the insurrection, and some actively supported the Government. The Catholic bishops and many priests also opposed the revolution, though some of the latter openly joined it, while its chief leaders were the son of the Protestant Duke of Leinster and Wolfe Tone, whose long-

[1] "It is a fact worthy of note that all the really formidable rebels Ireland has produced in modern times, from Wolfe Tone [1798] to Mitchel [1848] have been Protestants" (Justin M'Carthy's "History of Our Own Times," vol. ii. chap. xviii.).

concealed hatred to Roman Catholicism was deep, consistent, and implacable.[1] Such a union against England of Irish Catholic peasants and Protestant leaders of British descent was essentially opposed to the spirit and principle of the two previous risings to which Macaulay implies it bore some resemblance, but its distinctive features were alike important and unmistakable.

It is surprising that Macaulay pronounces this singular revolt "not less formidable" than the wars of 1641 and '89. But in both of these Cromwell and William III had to reconquer the greater part of Ireland; whereas in '98 the rebels not only never captured but never even attacked a single town of importance; they had, moreover, no military chiefs of any ability, except, perhaps, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who was arrested before the revolution began. Macaulay says that after its suppression it became as necessary for Pitt as it had been for Cromwell and William to consider how the victory should be used, as "the Englishry remained victorious." He wished, Macaulay says, to relieve the Catholic laity from civil

[1] See Tone's "Memoirs," published after his death.

disabilities, but was opposed by the King, and probably by public opinion also at this time in England. For this revolt was sometimes represented, both then and now, as entirely a Catholic movement, like the two previous risings, despite the evidence of historical facts.[1]

The result of this insurrection, though chiefly planned by Republican members of "the Englishry," was to inspire the English with confirmed distrust of Irish Catholics, while probably the English Catholics saw with horrified surprise the strange union of some of their co-religionists with the Jacobins, then triumphant in France. They were, however, superseded by Napoleon, and Macaulay forcibly describes Pitt's energy in striving by every available means to oppose his almost resistless power. The astonishing success of this wonderful general throughout Europe, his constant enmity to England, and the way in which fortune favoured him everywhere, for some time were, according to Macaulay, too much for Pitt's health and strength. Even Napoleon's foreign

[1] Gordon's "Irish Rebellion," and Madden's "Lives of United Irishmen."

triumphs were to his patriotic mind and prophetic spirit the sure tokens of future trouble and calamity to England.[1] Pitt died in the midst of Napoleon's victories, as Austria, Prussia, Spain, and Italy, after more or less resistance, all yielded to French energy and valour when directed by his amazing genius.

Macaulay, while praising Pitt's great abilities, declares that he was strangely misunderstood by many of his chief admirers.[2] He even says emphatically that the mythical Pitt resembled the real one " as little as the Charlemagne of Ariosto resembled the Charlemagne of Eginhard."

In two Essays on the Italian poets, Dante

[1] "All who passed him in the Park, all who had interviews with him in Downing Street, saw misery written in his face. The peculiar look which he wore during the last months of his life was often pathetically described by Wilberforce, who used to call it the 'Austerlitz look.'"

[2] He states that the toast of Protestant ascendency was drunk by persons calling themselves Pittites, though Pitt wished to carry Catholic emancipation; that the enemies of Free Trade called themselves Pittites, though he was far more deeply imbued with the doctrines of Adam Smith than either of the ministers Fox and Grey; and that even the Negro slave-drivers invoked his name, though "his eloquence was never more conspicuously displayed than when he spoke of the wrongs of the Negro."

and Petrarch, where Alfieri and others are mentioned, Macaulay prefers Dante to all. He believes that his "Divine Comedy" breathes the spirit of Homer and Æschylus. Macaulay's literary taste, however, is so exclusively founded on Greek models that he perhaps is scarcely just to other poets. He boldly declares that Ossian's poems, or those attributed to him, are "utterly worthless." Yet he owns they have been much admired by many men of genius, Napoleon among others, who, Macaulay admits,[1] "knew mankind well." He seldom, if ever, mentions in all his Essays the ancient Persian or Indian literature; the poems of Hafiz and Ferdousi he probably knew, but apparently cared little for. Neither does he seem to admire German literature, for he seldom mentions German authors, while he evidently takes no interest whatever in the Gaelic poems or traditions of his own country. His course of literary preference is—ancient Greece, Italy, and then England and France, whose literary men of the last and even of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries he apparently prefers to those nearer

[1] Essay on Chatham.

his own time. It is true he prefers Dante to Virgil, but the fact of Dante's genius reminding him of his model Greek authors probably influences his judgment considerably.

Macaulay relates having heard the most eloquent statesman of the age (without naming him) declare that "next to the works of Demosthenes, Dante is the writer most worthy of study by all who aspire to oratorical eminence." It is evident that the awful, or rather horrible, ideas which Dante's "Inferno" inspires interest Macaulay so powerfully that they arouse neither that horror nor depression which they probably produce in those regarding that poem less as a work of genius than as the foreshadowing of a future existence. In his chief poem Dante takes a gloomy delight in describing closely, and, as it were, realizing with a terrible minuteness, perhaps unequalled in fictitious literature, the future sufferings of the condemned. He writes with a calm purpose and a power of inspiring far more horror than he apparently feels, which are indeed astonishing, but to many readers must surely be revolting. Yet it is hard to believe that a man who not only excelled but delighted

in such descriptions really thought that he himself, or any dear to him, were in certain danger of enduring what he describes. Macaulay observes he was a sincere Roman Catholic, but he displays no particular dislike towards other religions.

Macaulay's remarks on the reformed and Catholic Churches, both in this Essay and that on Ranke's History, are as instructive as interesting, for besides the beauty of language which expresses them his views on these subjects are comparatively free from that irritation or prejudice which they too often arouse.

"The doctrines of the Reformed Churches have most powerfully influenced the feelings and conduct of men, but have not presented them with visions of sensible beauty and grandeur. The Roman Catholic Church has united to the awful doctrines of the one what Mr. Coleridge would call the fair humanities of the other. It has enriched sculpture and painting with the loveliest and most majestic forms. To the Phidian Jupiter it can oppose the Moses of Michael Angelo, and to the voluptuous beauty of the Queen of Cyprus the serene and pensive loveliness of the Virgin Mother. The legends of

its martyrs and saints may vie in ingenuity and interest with the mythological fables of Greece."

After saying that Shakespeare's "Othello" is "perhaps the greatest work in the world," Macaulay thinks that with his exception "no writer has looked on mankind with a more penetrating eye than Dante."

To his great countryman and fellow-poet, Petrarch, Macaulay awards less praise, but eloquent admiration. His account of Petrarch's coronation with the poet's wreath in Rome is indeed a masterpiece of language, equally beautiful and instructive:—

"Nothing can be conceived more noble or affecting than this ceremony. The superb palaces and porticoes by which had rolled the ivory chariots of Marius and Cæsar had long mouldered into dust. The laurelled fasces—the golden eagles—the shouting legions—the captives and the pictured cities—were indeed wanting to his victorious procession. The sceptre had passed away from Rome. But she still retained the mightier influence of an intellectual empire, and was now to confer the prouder reward of an intellectual triumph. To the man who had

extended the dominions of her ancient language —who had erected the trophies of philosophy and imagination in the haunts of ignorance and ferocity—whose captives were the hearts of admiring nations enchained by the influence of his song—whose spoils were the treasures of ancient genius rescued from obscurity and decay —the Eternal City offered the just and glorious tribute of her gratitude. Amidst the ruined monuments of ancient and the infant erections of modern art, he who had restored the broken link between the two ages of human civilization was crowned with the wreath which he had deserved from the moderns who owed to him their refinement—from the ancients who owed to him their fame."

Rome, both classic and mediæval, are alike present to his mind; his knowledge of both, with their distinctive peculiarities yet certain points of resemblance, seems about equal; all well-educated, patriotic Italians might exult and wonder at such keen appreciation of their imperishable literature, ancient and modern, by this Scottish writer, whose taste and genius were well adapted to arouse the admiration of an enlightened world.

From the sublime beauties of these grand poets to the quaint, ignorant, yet most original mind of John Bunyan was indeed a great change; but Macaulay devotes to him the same careful study and shrewd examination. This man lived at a time when religious dissensions in Great Britain and Ireland were at their height. Bunyan, whom Scott calls a rigid Calvinist, and was a member of a Baptist congregation, joined the Commonwealth army against Charles I. With his political views, therefore, Macaulay sympathizes, and he reviews his singular work the "Pilgrim's Progress" carefully, but with great indulgence. That it did good among many people is likely enough; it was the work of a sincere Christian anxious to improve all whom he could influence; its peculiar, original style was probably well suited to the times when it appeared, and its popularity and usefulness among numbers of English readers Macaulay pronounces immense, while in Scotland it was a still greater favourite.

Yet its spirit is certainly not free from bigotry of a very decided kind. The Pope, head of a Church which, besides containing the

majority of Christians throughout the world, has always retained, even in England, many people of education, worth, and distinction, is termed a malignant giant, far more dangerous than a cannibal ogre in a fairy tale. Bunyan was often reading Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" —that sad, painful record of victims to Roman Catholic bigotry—and thus in mind, though perhaps not in heart, he also yielded to a similar spirit of religious intolerance.

Macaulay observes: "His two chief companions were the Bible and Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs.' His knowledge of the Bible was such that he might have been called a living concordance, and on the margin of his copy of the 'Book of Martyrs' are still legible the ill-spelt lines of doggerel, in which he expressed his sympathy for the brave sufferers, and his implacable enmity to the mystical Babylon."

Thus by constantly dwelling on the wrongs of one party in a contest to the utter exclusion of those of the other, even a most benevolent heart and mind are likely to become hardened and unjust.

A virtuous Pope was to Bunyan apparently

an impossibility, for all occupying that position, he considered, were the destructive enemies of mankind, without reference to individual character. Macaulay remarks that the "Pilgrim's Progress," "this fanciful and delightful parable," as Scott calls it, was for a long time specially valued by the middle and lower classes, adding that "it is perhaps the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority has come over to the opinion of the common people." Had it been written at a time of less religious excitement, probably Bunyan's devout spirit would have made him more charitable, if not more tolerant, towards the opinions of others, especially towards those of some of the most illustrious among his fellow-countrymen. This book, despite its many good principles, certainly shows, as it were, the taint of civil war in its spirit and tendency. For instance, only one Pope is mentioned as the fit specimen of all who precede and follow him. Lords Carnal-Delight, Luxurious, Time-Server, Hategood, and others are the only noblemen introduced, whose names, of course, describe their odious characters, and they are thus pre-

sented as types of a numerous, influential, and, generally speaking, a respected class.

Yet there appears little, if any, bitterness of spirit in Bunyan's nature; in fact, the good teachings of the book are essentially his own, while its prejudices are chiefly attributable to the distracted times when he wrote, and from which few indeed, either of his opponents or partisans, were really free.

The remarkable and important question of admitting Jews to the British Parliament called forth a short but eloquent Essay from Macaulay, which followed his first Essay on Bunyan. He warmly advocated their admission, stating, among other reasons, that they already enjoyed "all the rights of citizens" in Roman Catholic France and in the Protestant United States of America. Throughout this brief Essay, able and eloquent as it is, Macaulay indulges in more sarcasm than usual. He infers that because many people opposed the measure they considered it "a profanation sufficient to bring ruin on a country," and "the most frightful of national calamities," etc. But though some vehement opponents may have used such language,

doubtless many opposed the project without ever using such extravagant expressions in support of their views.

This Essay, however, is more a spirited appeal to the general public than an argument with adversaries; and he eagerly declares that to admit Jews to Parliament who had always been loyal subjects could not be as great a political risk as to admit Roman Catholics, or even some Dissenters who were most strongly opposed to the Established Church of the country.[1] Macaulay here evidently felt himself on strong ground, and maintained it firmly. During the violent contests between the different Christian denominations even in Britain, the Jews had necessarily remained equally obedient to Roman Catholic, Prelatist, Puritan, or Independent Governments. No party feared or trusted them more than another. Yet till the nineteenth century the idea of admitting them to Parliament had likely never been mentioned and perhaps never contemplated.

[1] "For no question connected with the ecclesiastical institutions of the country can possibly come before Parliament with respect to which there will not be as wide a difference between Christians as there can be between any Christian and any Jew."

In religious firmness, however, in the power of doctrinal preservation, in the final success of peaceful yet heroic resistance to every kind of persecution or temptation, the Jews remain pre-eminent now, as they have ever done in the religious history of man. Neither in books, pictures, or speeches does this determined, self-reliant race ever proclaim their sufferings or zeal for the preserved faith. While Mohammedans glory in vast conversions, partly made at the sword's point, while Christians of different denominations glorify the martyrs adorning their own different sections of the same faith in books, pictures, and churches dedicated to their hallowed memory, the silent, enduring Jews say nothing. They appeal to the logic of facts alone, which, unlike Christians and Mohammedans, they neither historically relate, illustrate, nor describe in reasoning prose or fervent poetry. There stand their ancient synagogues in all the chief cities of the civilized world. In them their hereditary national Deism has never varied. The classic and Scandinavian paganisms, Brahminism, Parseeism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism have either triumphed or failed,

vanished or spread throughout the world, over which the two last-named now share the chief political power. But if Johnson's words on Shakespeare may be paraphrased, "The stream of time which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other religions passes without injury by the adamant of Judaism." Two most eminent writers of the nineteenth century, Cardinal Newman and Lord Macaulay, alike describe, though with different feelings, the vitality of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity. The former writes: "When we consider the succession of ages during which the Catholic system has endured, the severity of the trials it has undergone, it is quite inconceivable that it should not have been broken up and lost, were it a corruption of Christianity. Yet it is still living, if there be a living religion or philosophy in the world, vigorous, energetic, persuasive, progressive." Yet the far longer vitality of Judaism might also be described with equal if not greater force, for what Macaulay terms "ancient religion" is only so when compared with differing Christian forms and with Mohammedanism. The survival of Judaism may therefore, to some extent, be said

to resemble historically Macaulay's brilliant description of the survival of Roman Catholicism, the milk-white hind of Dryden's poem of the "Hind and the Panther": "Again doomed to death, the milk-white hind was still fated not to die. . . . Anarchy had had its day, a new order of things rose out of the confusion, new dynasties, new laws, new titles, and amidst them emerged the ancient religion. The Arabs have a fable that the Great Pyramid was built by antediluvian kings, and alone of all the works of men bore the weight of the flood. Such as this was the fate of the Papacy. It had been buried under the great inundation, but its deep foundations had remained unshaken, and when the waters abated it appeared alone amid the ruins of a world that had passed away. . . . The distribution of property, the composition and position of society, had, through great part of Catholic Europe, undergone a complete change. But the unchangeable Church was still there." [1] It might therefore be written with similar truth: Often doomed to death, Israel was still fated not to die. Paganism had had its day. New religions rose out of the confusion attending its

[1] "Essay on Ranke's History," p. 581.

fall, the most powerful being Christianity and Mohammedanism. New kingdoms, new laws, new nations arose, and amidst them emerged the most ancient of all religions. Such was the fate of Judaism. It had been oppressed more or less, silenced, persecuted both under the old and the new religions—paganism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism—but its deep foundations had remained unshaken, and when comparative peace prevailed it reappeared in every part of the fallen Roman Empire that had passed away. The distribution of the modern world among Christian and Mohammedan nations, the divisions and subdivisions of Christianity, have effected a complete change in the political as well as in the religious position of the civilized world. But the unchangeable faith of Judaism is still here. "The number of Jews throughout the world at present has been approximately calculated at twelve millions. Should this be an exaggeration, it is yet certain that the number far exceeds that which was ever attained in ancient times, even at the period of political independence. For hundreds of years Israel had striven after, and finally succeeded in obtaining, equal rights of

citizenship in almost all the countries of Europe. Jews sit in Parliaments and in Chambers, are admitted at most of the Universities as teachers, and the numbers who flock to them for instruction yearly increase." [1] Its votaries, besides increasing in numbers in most civilized lands, now enjoy not only a freedom but a trust and an influence they never possessed, or perhaps expected, since the political fall of their nation.

"The world has by this time discovered that it is impossible to destroy the Jews. The attempt to extirpate them has been made under the most favourable auspices and on the largest scale; the most considerable means that man could command have been pertinaciously applied to this object for the longest period of recorded time. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic princes, and holy inquisitors have alike devoted their energies to the fulfilment of this common purpose. Expatriation, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious and massacre on the most extensive scale, a curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws which

[1] Dollinger's "Studies in European History," chap. ix.

would have broken the heart of any other people have been tried and in vain. The Jews, after all this havoc, are probably more numerous at this date than they were during the reign of Solomon the wise." [1]

During the last two centuries or so the wars waged by Christians against each other and against non-Christians have probably been more numerous and cost a larger amount of human life than during any part of recorded history that can be substantially verified. The late able historian Lecky writes: "After eighteen hundred years' profession of the creed of Peace, Christendom is an armed camp. Never, or hardly ever, in times of peace had the mere preparations of war absorbed so large a proportion of its population's resources, and very seldom has so large an amount of its ability been mainly employed in maintaining and in perfecting instruments of destruction." [2] New warlike machines, new inventions for destroying human life in every conceivable way are tried and often adopted

[1] Disraeli's "Life of Lord George Bentinck," chap. xxiv. Written in 1852.

[2] "Map of Life," chap. vii. Written in 1899.

throughout Christian Europe with as much eager appreciation as if civilized Christians were surrounded by hostile savages, instead of by fellow-Christians alike claiming the credit of being civilized men. The passion for warfare as its necessity, perhaps the natural consequence, seems from historical proof to be really inseparable from human nature. Despite the various changes made, or supposed to be made, in mankind by the influences of different religions, it remains as firmly established among men now as in the days of Homer, as in those of the earliest records furnished by Jewish history. This fact is the more surprising when it is remembered that no religion has discouraged war or advocated peace so earnestly as the Christian, by the example as well as in the precepts of its Founder. Nearly all other faiths have usually celebrated victories over fellow-men in battle as among the glories to be desired by the human mind. Zoroaster, the Prophet of the Parsees, is said to have died as a warrior on the battlefield. The pagan and Scandinavian deities even took part in war and gloried in it, as did the enthusiastic Prophet Mohammed, whose warlike triumphs over his

fellow-countrymen finally established his faith in their ancestral country of Arabia. But Christianity was very different in its views of warfare. No praise or approval of either heroes or martial heroism was ever recorded as spoken by Jesus for the example or for the admiration of His believers, who were yet destined, as we now see, to be the chief rulers of the world. In examining religious history, the connection between the three great religions of the Bible, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, claim special attention from a political as much as from a religious standpoint. During remote antiquity the Jews, proclaiming their national Deism, and at war with neighbouring heathen tribes, held little if any intercourse with the Parsees in Persia, to whose faith their own bore a comparative resemblance. These two most ancient of known religions have survived all their contemporaries. Though alike without political independence for many centuries, and during that time generally despised or ignored, they seem at the beginning of this twentieth century to be reasserting, though in very different degrees, their claims to the consideration of the civilized world. The religion of

Egypt, the classic and Scandinavian paganisms, with the Arabian idolatry, have disappeared, with no sign of possible revival; while Judaism and Parseeism, endowed with unparalleled vitality, and surviving the political supremacy of other religions over them, now attract renewed attention among historical students, and, indeed, among most civilized men. After enduring centuries of ignorance, bigotry, and persecution, these two religions, together with all others ever heard of, whether existing or extinct, can now be safely studied in most Christian and in some Mohammedan countries. In the vast list of remaining and departed faiths, the first in political and social importance is undoubtedly the Christian.[1] This assertion cannot be denied by candid unbelievers. It has acquired this supremacy from the peculiar advantages of its intellectual as well as political history. While inheriting the Jewish Old Testament, it combined

[1] "Christianity commands the largest number of professing adherents. The fallacy which accepted the vast population of China as Buddhists in the mass has been exploded. The nations of Christendom are everywhere arbiters of the fate of non-Christian nations" (Mr. Gladstone's article in the "People's Pictorial Bible").

much of its Deistical teaching with the comprehensive cosmopolitan tendencies of the Greek and Roman political philosophy.

The time at length came when rival Christians, after denouncing each other as idolaters and Atheists, very gradually began to regard the ancient faiths with a favour and indulgence unknown before their own religious dissensions. The admission of Jews to the British Parliament, though resisted for some little time, was hardly opposed by one religious denomination more than by another. It was considered finally more a political than a religious question. Macaulay's views were evidently shared by the public, and the passing of the measure occasioned no subsequent triumph, depression, or excitement of any kind. This Essay Macaulay wrote soon after the one on Bunyan, whose religious antipathies were chiefly directed against fellow-Christians, while he spared the Jews entirely.

In a short Essay on Oliver Goldsmith, Macaulay observes that his poem "The Deserted Village" represents an English one in prosperity and an Irish one in its decay. This poem, and the comedy "She Stoops to Conquer,"

still acted successfully in London, the poem of "The Traveller," and, lastly, the beautiful story of "The Vicar of Wakefield," Macaulay praises; while Goldsmith's political and natural histories he considers the most worthless of his works, full of blunders, which he never corrected, though he had probably the means of doing so in many cases. Macaulay, however, on the whole, hardly does justice to Goldsmith's powers; for the rare union in his best works of extreme simplicity with profound, though probably not extensive, knowledge of human nature still maintains their popularity even amid the vast competition of the London literary world.

"The Vicar of Wakefield's" fame Macaulay thinks likely to last as long as the English language. It certainly has always been a special favourite with quiet, reflecting persons, and has recently been acted at two London theatres at the same time with great success. This fact, considering the vast number of living playwriters constantly offering their works to theatre-managers, proves that Goldsmith, despite his simplicity, well understood English popular taste. The merit of this favourite work has

been recognized by many generations of British audiences, notwithstanding the important changes in the social, political, and intellectual world since Goldsmith's time. His singular simplicity of mind seems never to have left him, even while living in the society of shrewd, accomplished, and learned friends. Dr. Johnson, the profound, sagacious moralist; Burke, the brilliant orator and statesman; Garrick, the unrivalled actor, who, as far as art permitted, revived the images and embodied the thoughts of Shakespeare—besides other men of great and varied abilities—all knew Goldsmith intimately. Yet despite such advantages of superior society, usually said to sharpen the wits as well as improve the mind more than any amount of education, Goldsmith remained as simple, and in some respects even as silly, as if living among ignorant or stupid associates.

"He lived in what was intellectually far the best society in the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplishment was wanting, and in which the art of conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four

different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all the four. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace should have been, whenever he took part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering rattle. So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said that Horace Walpole describes him as an inspired idiot. 'Noll,' said Garrick, 'wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll.'" [1]

In Dean Milman's opinion, Macaulay's Essay on History as a review is "somewhat too excursive." Yet surely there are few readers who would wish it different from what it is. In this sketch his profound learning and accurate memory recall the chief classic writers, with all their distinctive peculiarities. The lively Herodotus, the more serious Thucydides, the narrative of the patriotic Livy telling the story of his native country, and the picturesque style and sensational power of Tacitus, are alike recalled to the memory of British students. Macaulay's power-

[1] Essay on Goldsmith.

ful descriptions are evidently drawn, not only by an admirer and a scholar, but by a competitor and a rival. He declares that in describing character Tacitus is unequalled by historians and rarely surpassed by novelists. So writes the most attractive British historian of the nineteenth century of one who lived eighteen hundred years before him. In that immense interval of time literary labour and talent had extended to countries before unknown, and among millions whose general knowledge far exceeded that of the wisest men in classic times. Macaulay's own education, like that of most cultivated Englishmen, had commenced with a study of classic thoughts and writings, followed by an examination of mediæval and modern European writers who usually took Greek and Roman authors as their model. With all the best of these Macaulay was evidently acquainted, while he seldom, if ever, mentions ancient Asiatic writers like Zoroaster, Confucius, or Buddha, to the last of whom Professor Max Müller and other writers of the nineteenth century have recently directed public attention. Thus Greek and Roman historical literature, followed by that of mediæval and

modern Europe, fully engage Macaulay in this brief treatise. Perhaps in all his Essays or miscellaneous writings there is none which for its length contains so much variety of information. He reviews the four great historians of Greece and Rome, Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus, with all the animation of real interest and pleasure. The style of the first, combining the naturalist and traveller with the historian, Macaulay compares to "a delightful child," while he, of course, distrusts his many fabulous inventions. The graver Thucydides, with his occasionally graphic descriptions, such as that of the plague at Athens, Macaulay greatly admires, though expressing peculiar interest in the more fanciful Herodotus. Yet recent discoveries have confirmed some statements in Herodotus which were formerly discredited.[1] While bestowing some praise on Polybius and Arrian, Macaulay dwells much upon Livy, whose flowing, exuberant style, as well as his ardent patriotism, he praises highly.

[1] "Many of his accounts which were formerly doubted as improbable have been confirmed by the researches of modern travellers" ("Students' History of Greece," published 1869).

To Julius Cæsar's famous Commentaries, however, he perhaps does less than justice. He considers them models for military dispatches, but that they have no right to be called histories. Yet military dispatches hardly convey, and perhaps are not expected to convey, the sort of information upon various subjects contained in the Commentaries. Yet Macaulay well knew and appreciated the varied attainments of this wonderful man, for he declares, in the following brilliant and instructive passage, that Cæsar "united the talents of Bonaparte to those of Cromwell, and he possessed also what neither Cromwell nor Bonaparte ever possessed, learning, taste, wit, eloquence, the sentiments and the manner of an accomplished gentleman." [1] Even the natural history of Britain, its trees, animals, etc., which Cæsar found there, are carefully recorded, as well as military movements and strategical operations, to which merely military dispatches are often entirely confined.

Of all ancient historians Tacitus is evidently Macaulay's favourite, and is probably in some respects his model. He draws special attention to the wonderful skill and power with which this

[1] Essay on Hallam.

writer describes the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar. This prince, who according to both Tacitus and Suetonius was almost a fiend in human shape, a masterpiece of deceit, cruelty, and sensuality, possessing an almost unequalled knowledge of human nature, reigned supreme over the civilized world during the most eventful period of recorded history. "There was one living who scarcely in a figure might be said to have the whole world. The Emperor Tiberius was infinitely the most powerful of living men, the absolute, undisputed, deified ruler of all that was fairest and richest in the kingdoms of the earth. There was no control to his power, no limit to his wealth, no restraint upon his pleasures." [1] Under him the haughty minister Sejanus long enjoyed great power, and was known to be the patron of Pontius Pilate.[2] It was on the image of this alleged wicked sovereign Tiberius that Jesus is supposed by some to have looked when the Jews addressed Him, and at His request showed their tribute money.[3]

[1] Farrar's "Life of Christ," vol. i. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii.

[3] "They brought Him a denarius (Roman coin) and put it in His hand. On one side was stamped the haughty, beautiful features of the Emperor Tiberius with all the wicked scorn upon his lip" (*Ibid.* vol. ii.).

Macaulay considers the graphic sketch of Tiberius the masterpiece of Tacitus. To describe such a character, he owns, was a task of extreme difficulty, and its execution is almost perfect." [1] Macaulay evidently agrees with this historian's estimate of Tiberius, like Ben Jonson in his fine tragedy of "Sejanus," and Milton in "Paradise Regained," where even Satan terms him a "monster" when tempting Jesus to dethrone him.

After bestowing eloquent praise on Tacitus, Macaulay mentions several European historians in the Middle Ages: the French historian of chivalry—Froissart, the Italians' Machiavelli, Guicciardini, etc., but while admitting that modern historians have surpassed the ancient ones in "the philosophy of history," he does not examine their writings with the same pleasure. He makes very instructive remarks on the strange neglect with which even the intellectual Romans treated Hebrew literature, only admiring "themselves and the Greeks," while the latter admired "only themselves."

Although this most instructive Essay was written many years before his "History of

[1] Essay on History.

England," Macaulay apparently had some conception of it in his mind throughout. He says emphatically that the Roman Capitol and Forum impress him with less awe than Westminster Abbey and Westminster Hall; that he thinks with less pleasure of the heroic suicide of the Roman Cato than of Lord Russell's Christian resignation at the scaffold; and, comparing the deaths of Julius Cæsar and Charles I, declares that the latter, though an enemy to popular liberty like Cæsar, was not stabbed by flatterers, but tried and executed in the face of heaven and earth.

The spirit of these comparisons fully indicates the future Whig historian. He censures the well-known writers Clarendon and Hume rather severely, the former for his somewhat wearisome style, the latter for his Tory partialities, calling him "an accomplished advocate." Macaulay, however, has been often so called himself, and perhaps his greatest admirers can hardly deny the charge in some passages. He says, indeed, that all English historians were more or less partial, censuring Gibbon particularly, whom, strange to say, he seldom mentions in any of his writings. While regretting the dry, dull style of most British historians, he cannot resist paying

a well-merited compliment to Sir Walter Scott, who has used fragments of truth which historians have neglected, and constructed therefrom historical novels, "which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs." He adds that if Hume and Clarendon had written history as they should have done, Scott's novels "Old Mortality" and "Nigel" need not be sought for further information about the Puritans and King James I.

Macaulay then eloquently sketches an imaginary model of a "British History," saying how it should be rendered alike interesting and instructive to modern readers. "Henry VIII would be painted with the skill of a Tacitus, and his proud daughter as strikingly portrayed as in Scott's novel of 'Kenilworth.'" For these two despotic, tyrannical sovereigns Macaulay shows a respect, if not admiration, surprising in such a Liberal historian. He mentions Henry's "open and noble temper" and Elizabeth's "resolute spirit," while saying little about their pride, violence, and cruelty. In this beautiful sketch Macaulay has the historical genius of Tacitus and the romantic ideas of Scott alike in his mind while recalling the many noble and interesting

characters involved in British history, which, except by Scott and Shakespeare in a few instances were never represented with the force of reality.

The eloquence with which Macaulay praises Tiberius Cæsar's portrait by Tacitus reveals his own ardour to rival him in vividly describing the famous characters of British history. This task he was destined to accomplish with a success probably equal to his expectations, if not to his secret hopes. In his remarkable criticism on Hume he certainly mentions those very faults in writing history of which he himself is often accused by readers of sense and judgment.

" Hume is an accomplished advocate. Without positively asserting much more than he can prove, he gives prominence to all the circumstances which support his case; he glides lightly over those which are unfavourable to it; his own witnesses are applauded and encouraged. Everything that is offered on the other side is scrutinized with the utmost severity, every suspicious circumstance is made the ground for comment and invective, what cannot be denied is extenuated or passed by without notice," etc.

It was indeed far easier for Macaulay, as a

brilliant essayist, calmly to censure the errors of former historians than to avoid the same himself, when in later years engaged in a similar labour, and exposed to similar temptations from political enthusiasm.

The exciting emotions of admiration and abhorrence which affect the judgment of many historians, when describing a long succession of characters and events, were more likely to influence Macaulay's ardent spirit than the calm, sceptical mind of Hume, though in men so unlike they would be roused by different causes and for different purposes. Macaulay closes his Essay on History with a longing look, as it were, on the subject of his present thoughts and future achievement.

"The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. Many truths, too, would be learned which can be learned in no other manner. A historian such as we have been attempting to describe would indeed be an intellectual prodigy. In his mind powers scarcely compatible with each other must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner

see another Shakespeare or another Homer. Yet the contemplation of imaginary models is not an unpleasant or useless employment of the mind."

The task of accomplishing the splendid history as yet only in his imagination seemed at this time almost beyond his hopes. He eagerly sketches its plan, scope, and purpose, all of which he probably kept in his mind and fondly cherished there till future time and opportunity enabled him to present it to the world. As Milman says, all his Essays "were merely preparatory and subsidiary to the great history which was the final aim and palmary ambition of Macaulay."

Though his fame may rest chiefly on this last great work, it may be doubted whether the immense variety of knowledge comprised in the Essays, adorned and enlivened by his brilliant style, does not render them even more useful and instructive to general readers. Perhaps his remarkable talent for interesting people on subjects seldom made so attractive before has caused some readers to consider him superficial. The same ideas or thoughts expressed in a terse manner, and in tedious language, would probably inspire more confidence in some people. A brilliant style has been long associated with fictitious

narration, and rarely with truthful descriptions of actual events and real characters. To some, therefore, his writings might seem too sensational to be trustworthy on subjects of serious importance. Yet the opinions expressed in his Essays and miscellaneous writings have now been for many years before a highly educated world of readers, some probably both competent and willing to detect, if not exaggerate, faults and fallacies, but who have not done so except to a comparatively trifling extent. Their wide popularity has thus stood the test of able criticism, profound learning, and careful examination, in an age abounding beyond precedent in sceptical readers and accomplished scholars.

While the Essays refer chiefly to modern, or comparatively modern, times, the literature and wisdom of Greece and Rome are constantly mentioned. They are not introduced in wearisome extracts, nor often in profound reflection, but appear chiefly in brilliant comparison with those of mediæval and modern periods. The enthusiastic classical scholar appears indeed in all Macaulay's writings, even upon those subjects most interesting to modern readers. In his History, copious and varied as it is, he was

necessarily restricted to certain limits, but in his Essays and miscellaneous writings his mind explored an almost boundless range of subjects. Ancient, mediæval, and modern authors, times, events, characters, and scenes, he examines and portrays, not only with learned discrimination but with a lively interest, with which, indeed, many readers, if not previously imbued, will probably find themselves likewise inspired, by his attractive genius.

Some people, like Dean Milman, chiefly value the Essays referring to British history, while those relating to the Continent will probably most interest foreigners. Those on Machiavelli, Dante, and Petrarch will show Italians how this accomplished Scottish writer understood their history and historical works while appreciating their finest poetry; those on the Republican leaders Barère and Mirabeau will prove to Frenchmen that he could examine the most terrible and exciting period of their history with a calmness of judgment and freedom from prejudice rare among their own most able historians; but those on Frederick of Prussia and Ranke's "History of the Popes" possess perhaps a still wider European interest, common to all foreign

nations. They describe not only the rising military greatness of Prussia, but the character, talents, and weakness of the extraordinary French philosopher Voltaire, whose influence, whether for good or evil, over the European mind has long been felt and acknowledged among civilized nations. In the Essay on Ranke's History the contests of Roman Catholicism with Protestantism and with Atheism, its defeats, victories, and losses, through the progress of centuries, are told with a power, eloquence, and impartiality well fitted, indeed, to instruct the ignorant and enlighten even the educated of all religious denominations.

Macaulay's poetical works are few; the longest and best is the "Lays of Ancient Rome," in which again his classic taste and knowledge appear in all their brilliancy. In a remarkably beautiful poem written after his election defeat at Edinburgh he reveals his intention of devoting himself entirely to literature.

"The day of tumult, strife, defeat was o'er.
Worn out with toil and noise and scorn and spleen,
I slumbered, and in slumber saw once more
A room in an old mansion long unseen.
That room methought was curtained from the light,
Yet thro' the curtain stole the moon's cold ray.

Full on a cradle, where in linen white,
Sleeping life's first soft sleep, an infant lay.
And lo! the fairy queens who rule our birth
Drew nigh to speak the new-born baby's doom;
With noiseless step which left no trace on earth.
From gloom they came and vanished into gloom,
Not deigning on the boy a glance to cast.
Swept careless by the gorgeous Queen of Gain;
More scornful still the Queen of Fashion passed;
With mincing gait and sneer of cold disdain
The Queen of Power tossed high her jewelled head
And o'er her shoulder threw a wrathful frown.
The Queen of Pleasure on the pillow shed
Scarce one stray rose-leaf from her fragrant crown.
Still Fay in long procession followed Fay,
And still the little couch remained unblest,
But when those wayward sprites had passed away
Came One, the last, the mightiest, and the best.
Oh! glorious lady, with the eyes of light
And laurels clustering round thy lofty brow,
Who by the cradle's side didst watch that night,
Warbling a sweet, strange music—who wast thou?
'Yes, darling let them go,' so ran the strain,
'Yes, let them go, Gain, Fashion, Pleasure, Power,
And all the busy elves to whose domain
Belongs the nether sphere, the fleeting hour.
Without one envious sigh, one anxious scheme,
The nether sphere, the fleeting hour resign.
Mine is the world of thought, the world of dream,
Mine all the past, and all the future mine.
Fortune, that lays in sport the mighty low,
Age that to penance turns the joys of youth,
Shall leave untouch'd the gifts which I bestow,
The sense of beauty and the thirst of truth.

In the dark hour of shame I deigned to stand,
Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side.
On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand
Through months of pain the sleepless bed of Hyde;
I brought the wise and brave of ancient days
To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone;
I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze
Of the bright ranks that guard the eternal throne.
Amid'st the din of all things, fell and vile,
Hate's yell and envy's hiss and folly's bray,
Remember me, and with an unforced smile
See riches, baubles, flatterers pass away.
Yes, they will pass away, nor deem it strange
They come and go, as comes and goes the sea;
And let them come and go, thou through all change
Fix thy firm gaze on virtue and on me.'"[1]

There is a mingled regret and ardour in these fine lines, as if he loved the political life he was leaving as well as the literary one to which he was turning for solace and occupation. He abandons one with half-suppressed regret while devoting himself to the other with ardent interest. His active mind seems rather hesitating how it should best proclaim its greatness to the world; but the adverse majority decided his future course, and the defeated candidate for parliamentary distinction became one of the most eloquent, popular, and fascinating historians the modern world has ever seen.

[1] "Miscellaneous Writings," vol. ii.

PART II

HISTORIAN

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HISTORIAN

"I AM more than half determined to abandon politics and to give myself wholly to letters, to undertake some great historical work which may be at once the business and the amusement of my life." [1]

So wrote Macaulay in a letter from India in 1835. Many years, however, elapsed before he published the two first volumes of his "English History." This great work comprises also accounts of Scotland and Ireland from the death of Charles I till that of William III. Perhaps in his comparison of these two countries his Scottish partiality may be perceived. In perseverance, in self-command, in forethought, in all the virtues which conduce to success in life, the Scots have never been surpassed. The

[1] Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay," vol. i.

Irish, on the other hand, were distinguished by qualities which tend to make men interesting rather than prosperous. They were an ardent and impetuous race, easily moved to tears or to laughter, to fury or to love. Alone among the nations of Northern Europe, they had the susceptibility, the vivacity, the natural turn for acting and rhetoric, which are indigenous on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In mental cultivation Scotland had an indisputable superiority." [1] In the first chapters Macaulay surveys, briefly indeed, but with the knowledge of historian, scholar, and antiquary combined, the social and political state of England from the earliest records worthy of reliance. He also sketches the state of the Continent at the same period to better explain the primitive condition of England.

The early days of Great Britain and Ireland afford him none of that exquisite pleasure which he enjoys in the histories of ancient Greece and Rome. "Nothing in the early existence of Britain indicated the greatness which she was destined to attain. She was subjugated by the

[1] Vol. i. chap. i.

Roman arms, but she received only a faint tincture of Roman arts and letters. Of the Western provinces which obeyed the Cæsars, she was the last that was conquered and the first that was flung away. No magnificent remains of Latian porches and aqueducts are to be found in Britain. No writer of British birth is reckoned among the masters of Lationi poetry and eloquence." [1] The manners, customs, and ideas of Britons, Saxons, and Normans possess little, if any, attraction for him. After a short yet masterly survey of the political state of England, Scotland, and Ireland, when independent of each other, or nearly so, he rather hastens to the time when they were at least nominally united under the rule of James I of England and VI of Scotland. From this period he apparently feels far more interest in British history; for from about this time English literature was beginning to rival that of classic times in beauty, attraction, and wisdom. Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Raleigh, and Bacon had just given their thoughts to the English world; for though the three first wrote chiefly in Elizabeth's reign their works were probably more studied

[1] "History of England," vol. i.

and appreciated in the more pacific reign of her immediate successor.

The works of these great men Macaulay appreciates thoroughly. He views them with the pure delight of one thoroughly familiar with the highest literary models of antiquity, and whose taste has been formed by them. The chief writers in Queen Elizabeth's reign, finding English literature so scanty, had studied classic authors with all the more care and attention. With their literary tastes Macaulay has complete sympathy. Shakespeare and Ben Jonson presenting Timon of Athens, Julius Cæsar, Brutus, Mark Antony, Coriolanus, Tiberius Cæsar, and Sejanus with all the force and vigour of reality; Sir Walter Raleigh "collating Polybius with Livy," [1] and Bacon expounding, as well as studying the "Wisdom of the Ancients," all gratify Macaulay far more than if they had written tales about their own period. While enjoying the works of these illustrious men, and studying the political and social condition of their period, he apparently takes little interest in the many legends, romantic tales, or daily habits of their

[1] "Essay on Lord Burleigh."

times, in which his fellow-countryman Walter Scott took such extreme delight. He scarcely mentions with admiration or even interest the exciting tournaments, picturesque hawking parties and merrymakings, or any pleasures of English life "in the olden time." While he often delights in recalling the habits, manners, and customs,[1] as well as the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, yet in narrating British history he, for a long period, only recognizes a rude, ignorant, if not uninteresting people, as inferior to the great minds of former times as they were to their own civilized and enlightened posterity. No mystical or romantic tales are quoted, admired, or trusted; all popular traditions, prophecies, legends, and omens are disregarded and even ignored.

A matter-of-fact, practical, common-sense man of the world, as well as a most accomplished scholar, appear to be united in Macaulay. He delights in recalling the ancient glories of Greece and Rome, their wise men, fine arts, poetry, and beautiful fables, yet when he turns to British

[1] See his "Scenes from Athenian Revels," "Fragments of a Roman Tale," "Lays of Ancient Rome," etc.

history he is essentially practical and shrewd, eager to notice and commend every modern improvement. He apparently has little respect for "old English" customs or habits, constantly preferring present times to the past in everything, and welcoming the unknown future, like Lord Bacon, with enthusiastic hope and confidence. Therefore, despite his splendid talents and excellent motives, he is sometimes too enthusiastic to be just, and when describing those men who either share or oppose his own views, he, perhaps unconsciously, becomes very like what he himself terms Hume—"an accomplished advocate."

Perhaps the first time he shows this partiality in his history is when sketching the troubled reign of Charles I, his character and that of Cromwell. This important period apparently interests Macaulay more than any other part of British history, except the reign of his great hero William III. He mentions it in several of his Essays,[1] in his poetry, and again dwells on it in the beginning of his history with peculiar attention and interest. While blaming Charles

[1] Essays on Hallam, Milton, and "Conversation between Cowley and Milton."

for extreme duplicity and arbitrary designs, and cordially sympathizing with Cromwell, he yet explains the King's character in a very remarkable passage, which morally, though not politically, would greatly excuse his conduct.

"Faithlessness was the chief cause of his disasters, and is the chief stain on his memory. There is reason to believe he was perfidious, not only from constitution and from habit, but on principle. He seems to have learned from the theologians whom he most esteemed that between him and his subjects there could be nothing of the nature of a mutual contract, that he could not, even if he would, divest himself of his despotic authority, and that in every promise which he made there was an implied reservation that such promise might be broken in case of necessity, and that of the necessity he was the sole judge." [1]

This opinion seems confirmed by historical evidence, yet neither previous nor subsequent writers, whether friendly or hostile to Charles, have ever expressed it so clearly.

Macaulay does not often allude to the secret

[1] Chap. i.

causes and feelings which he believes actuated the King, and which, without justifying his acts, would surely prove him a conscientious, perhaps well-meaning, prince, though imbued by others with principles fatal to rational liberty and common justice. But it is when recording Charles's surrender, or rather, sale, by the Scotch Republicans to his enemies that Macaulay decidedly resembles his description of Hume in "gliding lightly over" the unworthy actions of those with whom he politically sympathizes. Macaulay's sense of honour forces him, indeed, to condemn the act, but only in a few words: "Charles fled to the Scots, and was by them, in a manner which did not much exalt their national character, delivered up to his English subjects." [1]

Another modern Liberal historian, Macaulay's inferior in ability and high principle, yet a man of talent, immense research, and industry, boldly and elaborately justifies this transaction as thoroughly reasonable and just on the part of the Scotch :—

"The Scotch saw no reason why they should

[1] Chap. i.

not derive some advantage from the person of their sovereign, particularly as he had hitherto caused them nothing but loss and annoyance. They therefore gave him up to the English, and in return received a large sum of money which they claimed as arrears due to them for the cost of making war on him. By this arrangement both of the contracting parties benefited. The Scotch, being very poor, obtained what they most lacked. The English, a wealthy people, had indeed to pay the money, but they were recompensed by getting hold of their oppressor, against whom they thirsted for revenge." [1]

Macaulay, though often prejudiced, never reasons like Mr. Buckle, yet probably had similar treachery been committed by political opponents, instead of blaming it in about a line, he would have denounced it with majestic eloquence. When his ardent feelings are not strongly roused for or against any particular individual he usually displays admirable fairness and calm judgment.

Hero-worship, especially in the cases of his three great favourites, Milton, Cromwell, and William III, whom he can seldom force him-

[1] Buckle's "Civilization," vol. iii.

self to blame, seems the chief, perhaps the sole, obstacle to his being as just as he is always earnest and sincere. After reviewing Cromwell's character and career in England, giving just praise to his wonderfully firm control alike over vanquished foes and impetuous adherents, he follows him to Ireland with the same admiration. Although too truthful to deny his cruelties there, for he does not attempt to justify them, Macaulay, by "briefly gliding over" them and dwelling on the benefits he conferred on his own party, tries to forget his hero's atrocities, and thus leave a favourable impression of Cromwell's policy on his own and his readers' minds :—

"He gave the rein to the fierce enthusiasm of his followers—waged war resembling that which Israel waged on the Canaanites: smote the Idolaters with the edge of the sword, so that great cities were left without inhabitants, drove many thousands to the Continent, shipped off many thousands to the West Indies, and supplied the void thus made by pouring in numerous colonists of Saxon blood and Calvinistic faith. Strange to say, under that iron rule the conquered country began to wear an

outward face of prosperity. Districts which had recently been as wild as those where the first white settlers of Connecticut were contending with the red men, were in a few years transformed into the likeness of Kent and Norfolk. New buildings, roads, and plantations were everywhere seen." [1]

Thus by his admission Cromwell's Irish policy was simply one of "kill and take possession." Had Charles I or any of his generals committed similar acts, benefiting and enriching their followers at the expense of their foes, Macaulay would scarcely have intimated gratification at the prosperity or improvements of the former in their new acquisitions. For instance, the cruelties of James II and his lieutenant, Claverhouse, Lord Dundee, towards the Scottish Presbyterians were indeed few compared to what he owns were those of Cromwell towards the Irish. Yet Macaulay describes at length, and with great compassion, a single execution by Dundee's orders,[2] while Cromwell's victims, though reckoned by thousands, as he admits, are briefly mentioned without apparent interest.

[1] Chap. i. [2] Vol. ii.

It is true that Cromwell in Ireland appeared as an avenger as well as a conqueror. The previous massacre of British colonists by native Irish has seldom been sufficiently considered by writers who describe Cromwell's Irish career as merely one of implacable, wanton cruelty. Yet Cromwell's severity towards the Irish was as little accordant with justice, and no more limited by its restraints, than was the previous conduct of his foes. The native Irish and Cromwell's soldiery apparently viewed each other in much the same light, as foes to God and man, with whom peace was undesirable, and towards whom justice and mercy were inapplicable. The conduct of the Irish under Roger Moore and Sir Phelim O'Neill proved their principles unmistakably; the language as well as the conduct of Cromwell and Milton proved the same. Cromwell's Irish career well coincided with his literary friend Milton's views in his "Peace with Irish Rebels," the spirit and purpose of which much resembled his poetical predecessor Edmund Spenser's "View of Ireland," written in Elizabeth's reign.

Macaulay, in estimating Cromwell, seems

almost fascinated by his many great qualities—these were certainly valour, wisdom, firmness, and in England admirable moderation after victory. Assailed by furious abuse from vanquished yet brave and fearless Royalists, surrounded by a triumphant, fanatical soldiery, in short, beset by every influence likely to excite passion and destroy self-control, Cromwell yet, amid all such excitement, kept his firm mind immovably fixed upon the great object of his life—the prosperity of England. Exerting all his bodily and mental energies to the utmost, he, as it were, held down his foes with one hand, while restraining his adherents with the other. Thus his mingled firmness and moderation, as Macaulay ably shows, wrung from his enemies, even from the historians Clarendon and Burnet, their unwilling yet all the more valuable testimony in his favour.

As ruler of England, indeed, Cromwell appears to merit all Macaulay's praise, and no higher could be expressed in the English language. To defeat enemies in the field and then outwit them in diplomacy, to exact steady obedience from armed followers, both after the exultation of victory and the depres-

sion of defeat, are certainly glorious results of exertion and ability. But, in addition, to control an exulting army, strictly repressing their violence while retaining their full confidence, was indeed a rare and wonderful triumph to achieve over human passions; and this triumph was Cromwell's, even by the admission of his enemies.[1] Yet Macaulay's unqualified admiration of him seems surprising in a consistent Liberal. He owns that Charles I's execution, which even if Cromwell secretly disapproved he never openly opposed, was the work of a minority. Both houses of Parliament, he says, were closed, and the majority in the Commons excluded by force. A revolutionary tribunal then condemned and executed the king, whose memory was cherished in the minds of the great majority of his subjects.[2] Thus the whole transaction of the trial and death of Charles, according to Macaulay, was the act of a bold minority of armed men, directed by a superior genius, to whom alike the power of

[1] Bishop Burnet's "Memoirs," and Lord Clarendon's "History."

[2] Chap. ii.

the king and the will of the people had to submit. It was the virtual triumph of a most able military despot, for Cromwell, Macaulay says, at this time "kept the hearts of his soldiers, and had broken with almost every other class of his fellow-citizens. Beyond the limits of his camps and fortresses he could scarcely be said to have a party." [1]

Here Macaulay's frankness and admiration for Cromwell seem very remarkable. In reality Cromwell succeeded in doing what Charles and his arbitrary minister, Lord Strafford, had attempted but failed to effect. They had also tried to make the people yield to their wishes in order to enjoy the illegal supremacy which Cromwell afterwards obtained by force, and almost against the will of the nation. Yet for the arbitrary king and minister Macaulay has neither respect nor sympathy, though he certainly shows some pity. But for Cromwell, who succeeded in obtaining absolute power after Charles had been executed for making a similar attempt, Macaulay's admiration is almost boundless.

Cromwell is, in fact, the hero of his imagi-

[1] Chap. i.

nation. Whether ruling in England with consistent wisdom and justice, or directing her foreign policy with signal success, whether controlling Scottish Presbyterians with a severity which, deserved or not, certainly ensured submission, or devastating Ireland and filling its plundered districts with his own adherents, he is still, in Macaulay's opinion, a benefactor of the human race, and entitled to the admiration of all posterity.

Macaulay's veneration for Milton is as intensely enthusiastic as his admiration for Cromwell. In each instance his great weakness is only too evident. They are to him idols of the mind as well as of the imagination. He is so captivated by their splendid abilities and success that he either ignores their errors altogether or tries to excuse them in a manner unworthy of his sense and judgment: "The most blamable act of Cromwell's life was the execution of Charles I. It was an unjust and injudicious display of party spirit, but it was not a cruel or a perfidious measure. It had all those features which distinguish the errors of magnanimous and

intrepid spirits from base and malignant ones."[1] It is evident from this opinion that the Irish atrocities, which Macaulay fully admits, yet made no more lasting impression on his mind than did the slanderous language of Milton in the "Defensio Populi," etc., though he justifies neither. He often praises Milton's best works eloquently, scarcely mentioning those in which his language is almost too scurrilous for quotation. The sublimity of his poetry, and the wisdom of the "Areopagitica" seem always in Macaulay's mind when alluding to Milton; his "Defensio Populi" and "Peace with Irish Rebels" he rarely mentions. Thus, when describing Cromwell, his wisdom and moderation in England are justly lauded through pages of eloquent praise, while his Irish career is hurried over in a few lines, and even in them Macaulay tries to palliate, without vindicating, his hero's conduct by describing the prosperity of his adherents while enjoying the spoils of massacred or banished foes.

Macaulay's admiration for Cromwell's rule and policy naturally prevents his rejoicing at the restoration of Charles II, yet he owns that

[1] "Essay on Hallam."

this event caused universal joy throughout England. Amid the national triumph and rejoicing Macaulay's political sympathies are apparently with the aged, blind poet, who was now in "Paradise Lost" deploring having "fallen on evil days and being surrounded with evil tongues." [1] But Milton was never prosecuted, though his language against Charles I, openly addressed to the English nation, must have been well known to the triumphant Royalists.

The fact of his being virtually pardoned after justifying the late king's execution in most abusive, and even calumnious, language was surely a proof of the clemency of the Royalists. Yet Macaulay never praises them for it, although such clemency was very remarkable when the facts of the case are fully considered. For Milton had even tried to insinuate and circulate the horrible charge of parricide against Charles I, in the hope,

[1] "Dr. Johnson, who, unlike Macaulay, examined the spirit of the "Defensio Populi," "Peace with Irish Rebels," etc., as well as "Paradise Lost" and the "Areopagitica," sarcastically observes that for Milton to complain of evil tongues 'required impudence equal to his other powers'" ("Life of Milton").

apparently, of blackening his memory, and thus destroying any sympathy for him.[1] Macaulay merely alludes to this accusation an an absurdity without mentioning Milton's assertion, which evidently few, even of Cromwell's party, believed. He never mentions this accusation by Milton either in his Essay on the poet or in the opening chapter of the History, where the deaths of James I and of Charles are both recorded. Yet this allegation was a most fearful, daring, and important one, and it is difficult to explain Macaulay's complete silence about it. To publicly accuse any man of murder has always been considered actionable by English law, but to charge a sovereign with parricide before his subjects in a pamphlet openly ad-

[1] "King Charles I began his reign with his father's funeral, I do not say his murder, and yet all the marks and tokens of poison that may be appeared in his dead body, but these suspicions lighted upon the Duke of Buckingham only" ("First Defensio Populi"). Again, in chap. v. of the same treatise Milton openly charges the king with parricide: "Charles murdered both his prince and his father, and that by poison. For to omit other evidences, he that would not suffer a duke that was accused of it to come to his trial must needs have been guilty of it himself."

dressed to them was an act of immense importance, involving a fearful responsibility. All other allegations, such as duplicity, tyranny, etc., might be to some extent matters of opinion. But if the guilt of a deliberate parricide could have been proved, or even rendered probable, against the executed king, it would have destroyed all sympathy for him in the hearts of the nation more effectually than either Cromwell's victories or Milton's eloquence.

Yet Milton himself only briefly mentions this most awful charge in the long list of sins, errors, and illegalities of which he accuses the king. Had he fully believed it he would probably have dwelt upon it; he apparently hopes rather to insinuate its likelihood than to prove its truth, though, his party being triumphant when he wrote, he must have had every fair means of investigating the matter, and every moral and political inducement to do so; yet the charge, never proved even by the king's most implacable foes, went openly forth to the nation in a public treatise. This celebrated Essay, bearing the popular name of "Defence of the English People," was, by

Macaulay's admission, falsely so called, who owns that its views and principles opposed the general voice of the nation, and merely expressed, though in most powerful language, the opinions of a daring and triumphant minority. But for Milton to escape the least penalty, without even having to recant or apologize for his statements, proves that vindictiveness was not among the many sins of the triumphant Cavaliers, like the vices of drunkenness, profligacy, etc., with which Macaulay justly reproaches many of them.

The executions of some of the regicides, which Macaulay mentions with indignation, apparently delighted an excited mob, who could not refrain from taking the wretched revenge of hanging Cromwell's skeleton—a contemptible act certainly, yet more harmless than might have been the punishment of Milton as a convicted libeller.[1] Some of the executed regicides, General Harrison especially, had treated their

[1] "All the contemporary accounts represent the nation as in a state of hysterical excitement, of drunken joy. . . . All London crowded to shout and laugh round the gibbet where hung the remains of a Prince who had made England the dread of the world" ("Essay on Mackintosh").

prisoners with merciless cruelty, and often executed them, deliberately quoting scriptural texts about slaying the ungodly in their own justification. Few indeed among them showed that moderation, self-control, and mercy which Cromwell had consistently displayed towards his English foes, despite their violent language, and even the personal danger he often incurred from their hatred.

Macaulay's opinion about his thorough complicity in the king's execution seems rather different in the History from his words written twenty years before in the Essay on Hallam, where, ignoring the Irish campaign, he calls it the most "blamable act of his life," thus attaching the guilt of the deed distinctly to him. In the History he says that though he seemed to lead he was forced to follow, and on this occasion sacrificed his own judgment and personal inclination to the wishes of the army. But since Macaulay admits that a large majority of the nation opposed the king's execution, and also that Cromwell had his army thoroughly under control, his unwilling submission to a minority composed of obedient,

devoted soldiers, does not seem a probable explanation of his conduct.

In one of his allusions to Charles I's execution Macaulay reveals his political enthusiasm by exultingly declaring that the regicides "were not midnight stabbers. What they did they did in order that it might be a spectacle to heaven and earth, and held in everlasting remembrance. They enjoyed keenly the scandal which they gave." [1] But this stern, vehement fanaticism, whether religious or political, and alike founded on self-righteousness, has usually inspired cruel bigots and zealots. The same language may be applied to those who burned witches or destroyed "infidels" in the firm belief they were doing right. None of such persecutors, not even the Spanish Inquisitors, were in any way "midnight stabbers." The crimes which they committed were also in "order that they might be a spectacle to heaven and earth, and held in everlasting remembrance." The midnight stabber is usually afraid of his fellow-man, and sometimes becomes a penitent, while relentless, sincere fanatics defy men utterly, and believe their cruel deeds to be praiseworthy duties to perform.

[1] Chap. i.

Macaulay, while giving a brilliant sketch of Cromwell's rule in England and successful foreign policy, owns that he was in constant danger of assassination from both Royalists and Republicans; his unpopularity, which increased rather than diminished through time, Macaulay admits but does not explain—"while he lived he was an object of mingled aversion, admiration, and dread to his subjects." The aversion and dread were doubtless felt by Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Royalists, and by many Presbyterian Republicans; the admiration seems to have chiefly actuated the Independents—a bold and daring minority, devoted indeed to Cromwell, but generally disliked.

Unless it was partly owing to their unpopularity, the general feeling against Cromwell seems very surprising, for his death was apparently regretted by none except his own soldiers. The rejoicing was at first concealed, or restrained, while his son Richard and his chief officers were supreme, but directly it could be safely shown it burst forth with a vehemence and unanimity so surprising that Macaulay himself is forced to use the exaggerated expression

that the whole nation seemed in a state "of drunken joy"[1] at the restoration of the monarchy.

Macaulay's indulgence towards the quiet, unambitious Richard Cromwell, in Chap. i. of the History, is rather different from his scornful mention of him some twenty years before, when the genius of his wonderful father seemed to fascinate him.[2] In describing the Restoration of Charles II the national delight is apparently less pleasing to him than the gloomy discontent of some Cromwellian soldiers, who looked sad and lowering when the young King appeared. Yet despite his admiration for the Commonwealth Macaulay himself much more resembled Charles I in literary and artistic tastes than the military zealots who supported it. Macaulay's accomplished mind strongly disapproves the following proceedings, despite his enthusiasm for

[1] "Essay on Hallam."

[2] In Chap. i. Macaulay says that Richard's "humanity, ingenuousness, and modesty admirably fitted him to be the head of a limited monarchy." In 1828 he wrote with scornful regret, and quoting Dryden's poem "But for the weakness of that 'foolish Ishbosheth' we might now be writing under the government of his Highness Oliver V, or Richard IV" ("Essay on Hallam's History").

Cromwell: "Churches and sepulchres, fine works of art and curious remains of antiquity were brutally defaced. The Parliament resolved that all pictures in the Royal collection which contained representations of Jesus or of the Virgin Mother should be burned. Sculpture fared as ill as painting. Nymphs and Graces, the work of Ionian chisels, were delivered over to Puritan stonemasons to be made decent." [1] Macaulay has little in common with either Independents or Puritans in their tastes and feelings, while to some extent sharing their political views. He keenly ridicules the Puritans for their reasons in suppressing the cruel practice of bear-baiting, which they did, he says, more because it gave pleasure to others than for the sake of humanity, "for they generally contrived to enjoy the double pleasure of tormenting both spectators and bear." [2] The Independents, he declares, were usually extremely ignorant, violent, and fanatical; they were usually "root-and-branch" men, who viewed "Popery, Prelacy, and Presbyterianism as three forms of one great apostasy."

With such zealots a man like Macaulay could

[1] Chap. ii. [2] Chap. i.

have little sympathy, but then "the soul of that party was Oliver Cromwell," and their brilliant advocate was the sublime poet Milton. These illustrious men Macaulay contemplates more with the reverent admiration of a grateful friend than with the calm judgment of a discriminating historian; whenever and wherever they appear they are almost always right, and their opponents thoroughly and provokingly in the wrong.

The character and reign of Charles II Macaulay sketches rather briefly, but with all his natural force and brilliancy, without either vehement praise or censure. Charles's faults of selfishness and profligacy he of course despises, but they do not irritate him like those of his father and brother; Macaulay accordingly describes his character with admirable care and coolness, and presents him to his readers as Charles probably really was.

"According to him every person was to be bought, but some people haggled more about their price than others. The chief trick by which clever men kept their places was called integrity. The chief trick by which

handsome women kept up the price of their beauty was called modesty. The love of God, the love of country, the love of family, the love of friends were phrases of the same sort, delicate and convenient synonyms for the love of self. Thinking thus of mankind, Charles naturally cared very little what they thought of him. His contempt of flattery has been highly commended, but seems, when viewed in connection with the rest of his character, to deserve no commendation. It is possible to be below flattery as well as above it. One who trusts nobody will not trust sycophants. One who does not value real glory will not value its counterfeit. . . ." [1] This view of Charles II's character is shared by Walter Scott when describing him in his interesting novels of "Woodstock" and "Peveril of the Peak."

Although the commencement of Charles's reign was one wild scene of rejoicing, merriment, and most extravagant loyalty, political troubles gradually appeared, and many suppressed conspiracies interrupted, though briefly, the general peace. In these plots the King's favourite (illegitimate) son, the Duke of Mon-

[1] Chap. ii.

mouth, had some share, and was for a short time banished. At this period, Charles having no legitimate children, his probable successors were supposed to be either the Protestant Duke of Monmouth or the King's brother, the Roman Catholic James Duke of York. These men were thorough contrasts to each other. Monmouth certainly resembled his father in lively good-humour and recklessness, while James, though gracious and kind to those he liked, usually showed a serious, grave disposition. Macaulay says that to both these dukes Charles was always kind and indulgent, though he never encouraged Monmouth to expect the throne, to which he doubtless considered his brother the just and lawful heir. But several influential Protestants gradually encouraged Monmouth's hopes, dreading the probable accession of James, well known to be a sincere and zealous Roman Catholic. For the first time, therefore, since the reign of Queen Mary the English Roman Catholics now anticipated political supremacy, hitherto the rival Protestant divisions of Prelatists, Puritans, and Independents having alike

enjoyed and shared it. But they had quarrelled so fiercely and offended each other so deeply that their common foe, encouraged by such strife among them, now reappeared, aspiring to supremacy, and was represented by the Duke of York.

These violent quarrels among Protestants were manifested even in the literature of the day. Butler's poem of "Hudibras," which was enjoyed by Charles and his gay Court, had for its chief object the bitter ridicule of both Puritans and Independents. Macaulay, noticing the "anti-Puritan reaction" in English literature, ranks Dryden among the most influential writers "who courted notoriety" in the reign of Charles II. His remarkable poem, "Absalom and Achitophel," in which Monmouth, the King's unruly, yet favourite, son is both admired and blamed, vied with Butler's sarcastic "Hudibras" in popularity; at this time Dryden apparently studied the characters and tastes of both Charles II and his brother. In his earlier poems the King is gay and voluptuous, in the "Absalom and Achitopel" Dryden flatters Charles, comparing him to King David, and praising him lavishly,

while gently blaming Monmouth, who, despite, his turbulence, was always the King's favourite.

Macaulay, while admiring Dryden's genius, has little respect for his character, but he makes a remarkably pathetic allusion to Milton, now old and living in quiet obscurity, who "meditated, undisturbed by the obscene tumults which raged around him, a song so sublime and so holy that it would not have misbecome the lips of those ethereal Virtues whom he saw with that inner eye which no calamity could darken." This beautiful passage, like all Macaulay's allusions to Milton from first to last, solely applies to him as a poet. The stern malignity expressed in some of his prose works Macaulay almost ignores, yet they doubtless had great influence, and were likely to embitter and harden all who believed him.

While the aged poet was meditating and pining in obscurity, his poetical successors, Butler and Dryden, were writing in different ways to please the gay, profligate King and his Court, the former by ridiculing the fallen Puritans and Independents, exposing and exaggerating their sanctified pretensions and hypocrisies, and

ignoring all their better qualities; and the latter by flattering Charles extravagantly, encouraging rather than censuring the general dissoluteness of the time. It was indeed a scene of joyous, giddy recklessness, a "wild carnival" Macaulay terms it, though saddened and darkened by dangerous plots, revolting perjuries, and unjust, deplorable executions.

Of all the statesmen of this time Lord Halifax, surnamed the Trimmer, is perhaps Macaulay's favourite. Amid the dangerous intrigues of the time "he was always severe upon his violent associates, and always friendly towards his moderate opponents." This is a noble description, and such a man would be indeed most valuable in the councils of any civilized State. Students of Church history may well regret that a course so admirable has not only been seldom observed but sometimes condemned by leading theologians, who too often behaved in a spirit precisely the reverse.

Macaulay, after describing the princes and chief statesmen surrounding Charles II—the grave Duke of York, the gay, reckless Monmouth, the crafty Sunderland, the plotting

Shaftesbury, etc.—briefly records the executions of the Whig leaders, Algernon Sidney and Lord Russell, and of the Roman Catholic Lord Stafford, whom Macaulay considers were all innocent of high treason, for which they alike suffered. The perjurers Titus Oates, Bedloe, and Dangerfield, who for some time obtained public confidence as well as money by inventing plots and falsely accusing many victims, are all introduced in this eventful second chapter. Here, however, Macaulay changes his narration, leaving the gay, thoughtless, frivolous King beset by false friends, trusting and trusted by nobody, himself neither cruel nor mean, yet carelessly allowing his subjects to accuse and execute one another with strange indifference. Yet he may have guessed the secret of his own position, for Macaulay owns that with all his recklessness he was a keen observer of human nature. He well knew the unpopularity of his lawful successor, and doubtless felt himself all the more secure. Macaulay leaves this profligate King surrounded by dangers and dangerous men, caring only for the

luxurious present, and heedless of the future, to describe in Chap. iii. the state of England in almost every social particular at this singular period. This chapter, besides being most instructive and interesting, well displays Macaulay's personal feelings as well as varied knowledge. He is throughout constantly comparing the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth when he wrote, and always to the immense advantage of the latter.

Nothing in the social state or life of England seems to escape his marvellous penetration in this remarkable chapter. From legal regulations to English daily habits both in town and country, all are examined and often compared to their state while he was writing. One of his chief objects is evidently to banish from the minds of his readers much veneration for the past, and to devote all their admiration and respect to the present and the future. He may, however, give too gloomy a picture of the state of England in former times, as an eminent fellow-historian apparently implies.[1]

[1] "Read Macaulay on the condition of the English poor, before the last century or two, and you wonder how they lived at all" (Froude's "Short Studies," vol. ii.).

He sees in the old days of England little to admire, and still less to wish recalled. Animated evidently by Bacon's famous desire "to enlarge the bounds of human empire," Macaulay, while admiring present times and systems when compared with past, yet eagerly anticipates, and wishes others to anticipate, a far more brilliant, happy, and prosperous future for civilized mankind.

Few if any British historians have probably examined the state of England in its social and moral aspects so fully as Macaulay has done in this chapter. He pays great attention to the chief English towns, the improvement of which, especially of the capital, he describes with great interest and evident delight. To the English country squires, however, he is probably too severe; his descriptions are doubtless true enough of the worst and most ignorant among them, but surely cannot fairly represent the whole class. If they do, Macaulay's ideas are at complete variance with those of both Addison and Walter Scott. Indeed, Macaulay himself seems rather shocked at his own description of the English squire, and modifies it; but clearly "the

fine old English gentleman—one of the olden time" has no charms for him whatever.

"His chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports and from an unrefined sensuality. His language and pronunciation were such as we might now expect to hear from the most ignorant clowns. His oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse were uttered with the broadest accent of his province." Macaulay adds: "From this description it might be supposed that the English squire of the seventeenth century did not materially differ from a rustic miller or alehouse keeper of our own time. There are, however, some important parts of his character still to be noted which will greatly modify this estimate. Unlettered as he was and unpolished, he was still in some most important points a gentleman. He was a magistrate, and as such administered gratuitously to those who dwelt around him a rude patriarchal justice, which in spite of innumerable blunders and of occasional acts of tyranny, was yet better than no justice at all."

In Macaulay's odious and repulsive picture it would be impossible to recognize any re-

semblance to Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley," to Scott's "Sir Henry Lee," "Major Bellenden," "Sir Hugh Robsart," or even to "Cedric the Saxon," of a yet more ignorant and remote period. Indeed, his description resembles far more Mr. Thackeray's odious "Sir Pitt Crawley," the Hampshire squire in "Vanity Fair." Yet Macaulay admits that Scott's historical novels, "even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable" than actual histories themselves in giving truthful accounts of former times and men.

Between the very different descriptions, therefore, of the English country gentry given by these great writers it might be safest to believe that one described the best, and the other the worst, specimens of the same class. Macaulay certainly sees no attraction in them, and therefore feels no interest in describing their peculiar dress, hunting exploits, or frequent duels with rapiers, subjects which Scott delights to describe, but which are unnoted in this otherwise most comprehensive chapter.

To Macaulay there appears little pleasing or romantic in the habits of our ancestors, about

whom he makes some rather unfair comparisons, such as that "a Londoner was as much stared at in a rural village as if he had intruded into a kraal of Hottentots." Yet the feelings actuating the two sets of starers would surely have been very different. But Macaulay's great desire is to prevent his readers regarding former times and habits with undeserved respect, displaying before them all the modern improvements of a more civilized age in their most attractive form. He therefore describes the social discomforts and disadvantages, as well as the legal abuses, of past times, with great attention, triumphantly comparing them to the general amelioration since effected in all these respects, which he partly attributes, directly or indirectly, to the practical philosophy of Bacon. He draws a most admirable and gratifying comparison—the truth of which on the whole is undeniable—between the merciful spirit of modern England and the strange indifference to human suffering so prevalent in the seventeenth century.

"It is pleasing to reflect that the public mind of England has softened while it has ripened,

and that we have in the course of ages become not only a wiser but a kinder people. . . . A man pressed to death for refusing to plead, a woman burned for coining, excited less sympathy than is now felt for a galled horse or an over-driven ox. . . . The prisons were hells on earth, seminaries of every crime and of every disease. But on all this misery society looked with profound indifference. Nowhere could be found that sensitive and restless compassion which has in our time extended a powerful protection to the factory child, to the Hindoo widow, to the negro slave, which pries into the stores and water-casks of every emigrant ship, which winces at every lash laid on the back of a drunken soldier, which will not suffer the thief at the hulks to be ill-fed or overworked, and which has repeatedly endeavoured to save the life even of the murderer." [1]

Though this comparison is doubtless true in the main, it yet has some appearance of exaggeration, at least respecting ill-used animals in this century. For despite frequent efforts of humane societies, cruelty to animals, whether in vivisection or over-driving, though generally

[1] Chap. iii.

condemned, scarcely incurs such universal indignation as he implies, even at the present day.

Except in the characters and talents of a few eminent individuals Macaulay sees little to admire in his survey of England in the seventeenth century. It was, according to him, a time of general neglect, discomfort, injustice, brutality, and legalized cruelty, all of which he exposes with the keenest interest and severity. The reader may be surprised therefore, even to the verge of incredulity, at Macaulay's detailed account of England's condition in the reigns of Charles II and James II. If England was what he describes during the latter half of the seventeenth century, what must have been her condition not only during the preceding reigns but also in those far more remote? Yet he gives no hint that England had retrograded since any former period, nor is it probable, nor perhaps possible, that the state of the country could have remained unchanged during the lapse of centuries. Had he written the histories of Henry IV or of the wars of York and Lancaster he could scarcely have described a greater amount of

general neglect, degradation, suffering, legalized cruelty, and injustice than he ascribes even to the latter half of the seventeenth century.

The fact of England never lying "at the proud foot of a conqueror," from those remote times to the period he describes, but being always free from foreign control, professing and studying Christianity for centuries, would indeed lead readers to expect a very different historical picture. Macaulay, however, never recalls with the least regret any part of remote British history, but devotes his energies to prove that the present state of England is in every respect far better and happier than the past, and that there is every reason to expect that its future state will be better and happier than the present. His own times he praises warmly when compared with the past, while eagerly predicting a still more prosperous and enlightened future. Upon this grand subject of human improvement the thoughtful historian feels and writes with the ardour of youth, and often with the inspiring interest of a sensational novelist.

"The general effect of the evidence which we have submitted to the reader seems hardly to

admit of doubt. Yet in spite of evidence many will still image to themselves the England of the Stuarts as a more pleasant country than the England in which we live. . . . In truth, we are under a deception similar to that which misleads the traveller in the Arabian desert. Beneath the caravan all is dry and bare, but far in advance and far in the rear is the semblance of refreshing water. A similar illusion seems to haunt nations through every stage of the long progress from poverty and barbarism to the highest degrees of opulence and civilization. But if we resolutely chase the mirage backwards, we shall find it recede before us into the regions of fabulous antiquity. We, too, shall in our turn be worshipped and envied. It may well be in the twentieth century that sanitary police and medical discoveries will have added several more years to the average length of human life; that numerous comforts and luxuries, where now unknown or confined to a few, may be within the reach of every diligent and thrifty workingman." [1]

But, unlike some literary youths and novelists, Macaulay's enthusiastic views are founded on

[1] Chap. iii.

historical evidence and personal experience of the world. He closes this chapter with a beautiful picture of England's future state. This is fanciful indeed, as all such ideas of the unknown must be. Yet it is founded so rationally and naturally upon the experience of the past that the most cautious and cool will not be much inclined to distrust it, while it will certainly delight the more sanguine by realizing on the firm basis of historical knowledge many of their hopes and aspirations.

After this very interesting chapter, which certainly describes England's social and moral state with a fullness, force, and eloquence seldom attempted by historians, Macaulay resumes his narration and records the death of Charles II. This prince, the incarnation of selfish and reckless dissipation, formed a thorough contrast to the many fierce, ambitious, restless spirits surrounding him to the last, whose conflicting interests and wishes were destined to cause future trouble, suffering, and war. The good-humoured, cheerful, witty disposition of Charles somewhat lessens Macaulay's dislike to him; he gently blames his dissolute habits, but hardly

views them with the horror with which they were regarded by some of his most austere subjects.

The person towards whom Macaulay feels a dislike, and even hatred, which, though partly well founded, may be sometimes perhaps excessive, in his unfortunate successor, James II. This prince seems to Macaulay almost like the chief villain of a novel to the inventive author. He appears in some respects the embodiment of all that a mind like Macaulay's would detest particularly—proud, bigoted, arbitrary, and dull; the rule of such a prince would indeed oppose most of Macaulay's ideas of human happiness and improvement. But respecting James's conduct to his subjects, the peculiar circumstances of his early life should be remembered, in order to form a just opinion. In the first place, the public execution of his father had evidently made a profound, lasting impression on his naturally thoughtful, serious, and perhaps rather gloomy mind. This awful event had apparently made no lasting impression on Charles II; it had neither made him hate nor fear his subjects, nor even regard any section of them with the least bitterness. Although he died a Roman Catholic, he

had never shown any decided preference for that creed, and Macaulay states it was with difficulty, if not danger, that a priest was brought to him at the very last by his brother. "If it cost me my life," exclaimed the future King, "I will fetch a priest!" Such was the dislike with which Roman Catholicism was generally viewed at this time that Father Huddleston had to be brought in disguise to the palace.

Charles's death, detailed in Macaulay's peculiar, dramatic style, claims special attention, as it really proves beyond doubt the intense religious prejudices existing, even among the most influential and enlightened English people at this period. Charles, careless and dissolute through life, at last followed his brother's advice, but still retained that extraordinary levity which had always distinguished him. Macaulay records that he politely apologized to his courtiers for not dying sooner, but "hoped they would excuse it." This was the last display of that "exquisite urbanity," as Macaulay terms it, which he had always shown to all persons and on every subject. He was thus an amazing contrast to the earnest, fierce, ambitious, and bigoted spirits

among whom he lived, and by whom England was destined to be involved in sanguinary wars and tumults after his death.

The new King, James II, ascended the throne with the bitter recollection of the deaths of his father and brother firmly impressed upon his mind. The first imbued him with the utmost dread of his subjects acquiring more liberty than he could prevent, the latter with dislike of all religious systems but his own, which aspired to political influence. He therefore detested Episcopalians and Presbyterians with peculiar bitterness, as they were numerous and powerful, while to small sects like the Quakers, few in number and having little influence, he was disposed to be just and tolerant. He was accordingly gracious and friendly to the celebrated Quaker William Penn, a man generally respected.

Macaulay seems rather puzzled to explain the apparent cordiality between the arbitrary Roman Catholic King and this mild, benevolent enthusiast, whose peculiar faith, Macaulay owns, differed more essentially from Roman Catholicism than any other form of Christianity. One bond between them, Macaulay says, was the

common dislike in which their religions were held by Prelatists, Presbyterians, and Independents, then the most powerful Christian divisions, who had all recently enjoyed political supremacy, either in England or Scotland.

"Between James and Penn there had long been 'a familiar acquaintance,'" and the latter was believed to have great influence. Macaulay, while praising Penn for many excellent qualities, implies that he suffered himself to be cajoled and flattered, for "his resolution gave way when attacked by royal smiles, female blandishments, and the insinuating eloquence of veteran diplomatists and courtiers." [1] But Macaulay's sketch of Penn is scarcely satisfactory. He writes with apparent hesitation: "To speak the whole truth concerning Penn is a task which requires some courage, for he is rather a mystical than a historical person. Rival nations and hostile sects have agreed in canonizing him. England is proud of his name.

"The respectable society of which he was a member honour him as an apostle; by pious men of other persuasions he is generally regarded

[1] Vol. i.

as a bright pattern of Christian virtue. Meanwhile, admirers of a very different sort have sounded his praises. The French philosophers of the eighteenth century pardoned what they regarded as his superstitious fancies in consideration of his contempt for priests and of his cosmopolitan benevolence, impartially extended to all races and to all creeds." [1]

Penn, however, probably felt a respectful sympathy, natural in a tolerant mind, for a king who, at the outset of his career, represented, like himself, a Christian denomination, disliked, distrusted, and, as Macaulay says, considered "beyond the pale of the largest toleration." Thus the Roman Catholic King and his Quaker subject, both men peculiarly devoted to their different religions, were brought strangely together, and each viewed with suspicious, scornful hostility by the numerous and influential Prelatists, Presbyterians, and Independents, who, while distrusting one another, cordially agreed in disliking and suspecting the Catholics and Quakers.

When the social and political positions of these two Christian denominations are considered, there

[1] Hist., vol. i. chap. iv.

seems great reason for Penn's confidence in and sympathy for James, even by Macaulay's own statements, at the beginning of his reign, without attributing Penn's conduct to a contemptible vanity, inconsistent with his character and principles. There is no doubt that Penn died as much respected and honoured as he had lived, while had he been proved or thought as vain and weak as Macaulay suspects rather than states, his reputation, especially among his own quiet, devout sect, would have suffered materially.

From Macaulay's own account of the state of religious feeling in England, there seems ample reason for the distrusted King and the equally despised Quaker sympathizing with each other, without imputing mean motives, deceit, or personal vanity to either. At first James might reasonably believe himself representing an oppressed minority in Great Britain and an oppressed majority in Ireland. The ruling Protestants might indeed have referred to the persecuting reign of Queen Mary, the last Roman Catholic sovereign, as their excuse, though not on Christian principles, for adopting retaliatory measures, but even this excuse could not be urged

for intolerance, either in act or spirit, towards the few and harmless Quakers. Thus Macaulay clearly shows that by indulging them James could plausibly claim for his co-religionists a far greater toleration than they had for years experienced under Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Independents.[1]

The general dislike to Roman Catholics was now so great throughout Britain that Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles II, popularly called the Protestant Duke, was tempted to head a revolution, which soon resulted in his defeat, capture, and execution. Macaulay describes this remarkable revolt with great minuteness, and while blaming Monmouth for issuing a savage proclamation quite at variance with his mild temper, yet evidently pities his sad fate. In this document he actually accused James of

[1] "The Quakers were guiltless of all offence against James and his House. No libel on the Government had ever been traced to a Quaker. In no conspiracy against the Government had a Quaker been implicated. It was natural that James should make a wide distinction between this harmless race and those fierce and restless sects which considered resistance to tyranny as a Christian duty, and which had during four centuries borne peculiar enmity to the House of Stuart" (Chap. iv.).

murdering the late King, summoning all true Englishmen to bring him to justice as a tyrant and murderer, while he himself headed those who obeyed his call in open rebellion. Shortly before his execution he asked to see the King, who admitted him for the last time to his presence. Macaulay owns that Monmouth was justly condemned, yet he says for James "to see him and not to spare him was an outrage upon humanity and decency." If seeing him aroused hopes of pardon in Monmouth, this statement might be true enough; but perhaps Macaulay hardly sufficiently considers another cause for the King's granting an interview, which probably influenced him more than any other motive—the hope of converting the Duke to the only faith which, in James's narrow mind, could secure his eternal pardon. Monmouth hinted to the King himself at his becoming a Roman Catholic if his life were spared, and it is therefore probable that his inclination or feelings in this respect were conveyed to James before the interview. When, however, Monmouth found James implacable, though most anxious for his soul's conversion, he showed no further wish

to change his religion and died a professed Protestant.

The attractive, even fascinating, appearance of this unfortunate prince is described both in Scott's "Old Mortality" and by Dryden. The latter, who had doubtless seen him, writes:—

"In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,
And seemed as he were only born for love.
What'er he did, was done with so much ease,
In him alone t'was natural to please.
His motions all accompanied with grace,
And Paradise was opened in his face."
("Absalom and Achitophel.")

The whole account of Monmouth's revolt, capture, and imprisonment, his interview with James, his dreadful execution, and the sympathy of those who beheld it, are recorded in Macaulay's best style; for had these events been told by an eye-witness, they could hardly be described with more force, precision, or pictorial effect. After detailing the execution at length, Macaulay closes his first volume with long and graphic accounts of the trials and executions of Monmouth's followers in the South of England, under the auspices of Judge Jeffreys. This man, who

has recently been rather vindicated, Macaulay had previously mentioned when presiding at the punishment of Titus Oates, and also at the trial of the pious Nonconformist Richard Baxter. Macaulay's indignant, vivid description renders this judge as odious to his readers as if he were the villain of a romance persecuting and murdering all the most interesting persons in it. Not only his violence and cruelty, but coarse manners and features, are described as carefully as if he were some evil monster in a fairy tale. Macaulay avers that Jeffreys boasted he had executed more traitors than all his judicial predecessors had done since the Conquest. This language may have been exaggerated, yet Macaulay states with just horror that Jeffreys executed three hundred and twenty persons during his circuit through the South of England, describing with pathetic accuracy the executions of many victims, both men and women, for alleged treason or connivance at the escape of fugitives.

Macaulay evidently desires to make his readers view "the wicked King and the wicked judge," as he terms them, with about equal abhorrence,

yet the charges of wanton cruelty that he brings against both at this triumphant period of their history may be rather exaggerated. He begins his second volume by declaring that "James was now at the height of power and prosperity," after the suppression of the combined rebellions of Monmouth and the Earl of Argyle in England and Scotland. Yet if the religious as well as the political state of Britain be considered, it seems that his power could hardly have been ever very firmly established. The combined revolts of Monmouth and Argyle were indeed suppressed without much trouble or loss of men and money, for, as Macaulay shows, though the Duke was personally popular, his well-known illegitimacy and equally well-known imprudence effectually prevented his ever being a formidable claimant to the British throne. Argyle's rebellion in Scotland was still less important, and he was soon captured and executed. But the strong dislike to Roman Catholicism which now animated all Protestant divisions suggested a constant distrust and suspicion of the King himself among the majority of his British subjects.

About this time the poet Dryden wrote his

celebrated poem "The Hind and the Panther," in which the different religions in Britain are cleverly, though of course partially, described from a Roman Catholic point of view. King James II is the royal, generous lion; the "milk-white hind," detested by other animals, is the Roman Catholic Church; the spotted, mischievous panther the established Episcopal Church; the "greedy wolf" personates the Puritans; the "bloody bear" the Independents; the "fox" the Socinians; the "bristled boar" the Anabaptists; and the "buffoon ape" the Atheists; while the timid "quaking hare" represents the Society of Friends. In these strange comparisons the idea of the hind and the hare, as large and small game, surrounded by hostile animals, may have indeed rather resembled the position of Roman Catholics and Quakers at the accession of James II.

"A milk-white Hind immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.

. . . . .

Panting and pensive now she ranged alone,
And wandered in the kingdoms once her own.

The common hunt, though from their rage restrained
By sovereign power, her company disdained,
Grinned as they passed, and with a glaring eye
Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity.
The bloody Bear, an independent beast,
Unlicked to form, in groans her hate expressed.
Among the timorous kind the quaking Hare
Professed neutrality, but would not swear.
Next her the buffoon Ape, as atheists use,
Mimicked all sects and had his own to choose;
Still when the Lion looked, his knees he bent,
And paid at church a courtier's compliment."

This poem, despite its fanciful character, probably produced no good effect on the King and nation generally, as it certainly tended to embitter and increase those religious antipathies which it was a Christian duty to diminish as much as possible. The poem, in Macaulay's opinion, contains the finest passages Dryden ever wrote, and "appeared with every advantage which royal patronage could give." It was doubtless a great favourite with James, for besides ascribing to him the real strength and imaginary nobleness of the king of beasts, it describes his religion as the milk-white hind "Innocent within. She feared no danger, for she knew no sin," etc., yet was hated by the other beasts of the forest,

and saved from their ferocity by the protection of the royal lion.

Considering the religious dissensions of this time, and that Roman Catholics, Prelatists, Puritans, and Independents had each alternately ruled, and each abused political power in the opinions of the rest, it is not surprising that these should be represented in a fanciful poem as thoroughly good or thoroughly wicked, according to the chance views or interests of the writer. But neither Socinians, Quakers, nor Atheists had ever ruled in England, yet none were spared by the keen wit of Dryden. The Atheists had comparatively little right to complain of being compared to a "buffoon ape who mimicked all sects and had his own to choose," for sarcasm and ridicule have usually been their chief weapons from the days of Lucretius to Voltaire. But the poor Socinian, "false Reynard," apparently deserved the name, chiefly for trying, like the clever fox in Æsop's Fables, to avoid offending others, in whose power he was, by exerting all his wits and cunning to save his life. The quaking hare "who professed neutrality but would not swear," and quite harmless, might not,

perhaps, have satisfied William Penn, but well represented the Quakers as entitled to protection, which was all the favour so small and quiet a sect probably desired at this time.

Macaulay says that in the beginning of this poem the Anglican Church is mentioned tenderly, and exhorted to join Roman Catholics against Protestant Dissenters, but at the close, and in the Preface, a contrary spirit appeared, and the Puritans, Independents, etc., are invited to join Roman Catholics against the Established Church. This change, he says, in the language of the Court poet revealed a great alteration in the King's own policy; for he apparently hoped for some time that the Episcopal Church would, as Macaulay says, "share ascendency with the Church of Rome." When once this idea was abandoned, James considered, perhaps truly, that, despite its closer resemblance to his own faith than other Protestant denominations, it was yet a most formidable foe to the Church of Rome.

Macaulay, while stating the intense dislike to Roman Catholicism throughout Great Britain. blames James most severely for increasing that feeling against his co-religionists by his arbitrary

conduct, when it was in his power to greatly mitigate popular prejudices by a prudent policy towards his Protestant subjects; for most eminent Roman Catholics, and certainly the Pope himself, highly disapproved of James's conduct as very prejudicial to their interests. This Pope, Innocent XI, was evidently a man of enlightenment, humanity, and moderation. He not only gave the best advice to the obstinate King to avoid irritating British Protestant subjects by his rashness, but resolutely condemned the persecution of French Protestants, even by a strong Roman Catholic Government, when politically such a persecution was apparently for the interests of Roman Catholicism.

While the Pope thus set a wise example to both opponents and partisans, some English Roman Catholics, among whom Father Petre was conspicuous, gave very different counsel to James, which he followed, unfortunately for himself. In fact, James respected the name and position of a Pope more than he was inclined to obey a reasonable, just man who bore that title, and who proved himself so eminently worthy of it; for Pope Innocent, like the Protestant

champion, William of Orange, took a European view of British politics, and was remarkably free from those personal or national interests and prejudices which actuated James and many of his advisers.

Father Petre, Macaulay says, was an eloquent, polished man, but weak, vain, and ambitious. He is, however, perhaps prejudiced against this man, whom he even rather ridicules when doing his duty as a priest and subject by remonstrating on his knees with James about his faithlessness to the queen. "His duty was not less strenuously performed because it coincided with his interest," etc. Macaulay, however, is naturally indignant with Petre throughout for his constant encouragement of James's intolerance and arbitrary policy, and declares that "of all the evil counsellors, he bore perhaps the largest share in the ruin of the House of Stuart."[1] He was a Jesuit rather distrusted by the Pope, who, like some of his predecessors and successors, opposed rather than favoured this celebrated order.

Macaulay gives a very graphic, comprehensive, though not friendly, account of this

[1] Chap. v.

remarkable body, whose wonderful energy and practical enthusiasm have made them alternately objects of the deepest veneration and distrust in different Christian countries. Their very name has been made in England to express deceit and artifice, for "Jesuitical" conduct is often supposed the reverse of honest or trustworthy. Macaulay, in his admirable sketch of this order, shows profound knowledge of their history throughout the world; their good and evil qualities are carefully examined, and though his description is on the whole unfavourable, he yet acknowledges their many good deeds in a spirit of calm impartiality.

As before observed, Macaulay, when describing religious men, or societies of men, usually preserves a fairness and discrimination seldom found in the works of theologians; while in describing kings and statesmen his political enthusiasm often makes him less trustworthy. His account of the Jesuits [1] is a masterpiece of steady discrimination, extensive knowledge, and philosophic calmness. Their system, profession, objects, and workings are explained to civilized readers with

[1] Chap. vi.

the evident desire of telling complete truth about them. His account is the more valuable as in most previous British histories they are either sternly denounced or vehemently praised, according to the different feelings of various historians.

" With the admirable energy, disinterestedness, and self-devotion which were characteristic of the society, great vices were mingled. . . . So strangely were good and evil intermixed in the character of these celebrated brethren, and the intermixture was the secret of their gigantic power. That power could never have belonged to mere hypocrites. It could never have belonged to rigid moralists. It was to be attained only by men sincerely enthusiastic in the pursuit of a great end, and at the same time unscrupulous as to the choice of means." [1]

In the reign of James II the Jesuits, according to Macaulay, looked more to France than to Rome for their guidance, and their English representative, Father Petre, acquired such influence over the King that the advice and counsel of the Head of their Church were in politics utterly disregarded. The infatuated folly of

[1] Chap. vi.

James in steadily alienating his subjects is clearly detailed throughout this sixth chapter.

The dismissal of the Protestant ministers Lords Clarendon and Rochester, men of moderate views and generally respected, shows clearly the strong religious and political excitement prevailing at this time. James had tried and failed to make Rochester a Roman Catholic, and it was said the latter's dismissal was owing to his firm refusal to change his faith. Macaulay thinks this statesman hardly deserved the general sympathy, and even admiration, he obtained, for his refusal to abandon his religion immediately made him a favourite. At this period there were few newspapers devoted as now to the praise or censure of contending statesmen.

During many years past in Britain both party strife and political rivalry have often been noticed in caricatures and witty remarks, which, whether friendly or hostile, usually display a lively spirit, either of merry applause or equally merry derision. Though Macaulay is eminently a political and serious writer, enjoying as well as diffusing classic knowledge, he yet occasionally writes with amusing and comic expressiveness.

He thus poetically describes some alarmed Anglican divines meeting together and dreading the revival in political power of Roman Catholicism in England:—

> "Dr. Nimrod, whose orthodox toes
> Are seldom withdrawn from the stirrup;
> Dr. Humdrum, whose eloquence flows
> Like droppings of sweet poppy syrup;
> Dr. Rosygill, puffing and fanning
> And wiping away perspiration;
> Dr. Humbug, who proved Mr. Canning
> The beast in St. John's Revelation."[1]

But in the times of James II all political changes and intrigues were involved with deep religious feelings, hopes, or motives. Accordingly Macaulay says that during Rochester's disgrace the Old and New Testaments were examined to find parallels for his heroic piety. He was "Daniel in the den of lions, Shadrach in the fiery furnace, Peter in the dungeon of Herod, Paul at the bar of Nero." So thoroughly were religious and political feelings combined in England at this time that Macaulay himself seems amazed at the determined obstinacy of James in irritating the public mind more and

[1] "Miscellaneous Writings," vol. ii.

more by recklessly appointing violent, unpopular men to the highest offices of state.

The fall of Clarendon, Viceroy of Ireland, accompanied or soon followed that of Rochester, and he was replaced by Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel. To this personage Macaulay shows great dislike, yet he was evidently a man of energy and loyalty to his sovereign, but of violent passions and reckless habits. Macaulay closes the sixth chapter by calling the dismissal of Rochester and Clarendon a great epoch in the reign of James II.

From this time the King's evident object was not the toleration but the political supremacy of his own religion, now professed in Britain by a small minority, and generally viewed with a distrust and aversion which many moderate Protestants could hardly deny were extravagant and unreasonable. Yet James by his reckless policy seemed resolved to verify the worst suspicions of his Protestant subjects, and acted as if by the advice of the foes rather than the friends of his Church, to promote the interests of which his future life was exclusively devoted.

During this time of popular discontent, dread,

and anxiety the Prince of Orange, James's son-in-law, was first thought of by the Protestants as their "Deliverer." This prince, Macaulay's hero from the seventh chapter to the end of the History, he describes with an almost affectionate enthusiasm. In him Macaulay evidently recognizes a man pre-eminently fitted from his youth to control, direct, and govern. While a child he was remarkably observant, but he studied the living characters around him rather than the works of those he never saw. He knew little of arts and sciences, and cared little for literature; if he nourished ambitious hopes and thoughts, he kept them carefully to himself.[1]

Though even Macaulay cannot prove him very amiable, he had always that fixed, steady aversion to persecution and intolerance natural to a calm gifted mind, studying human nature from personal experience rather than from the teachings of others. Macaulay says he was a predestinarian, and that this was "the keystone of his religion." His being so perhaps explains in great measure

[1] "Long before he reached manhood he knew how to keep secrets, how to baffle curiosity by dry and guarded answers, how to conceal all passions under the same show of grave tranquillity."

that wonderful courage, amounting to utter insensibility to fear, which Macaulay praises so highly, but probably not more than his real heroism merited.[1]

Yet Macaulay's classic mind cannot boast that his hero, like himself, took much interest in the heroes or the works of antiquity. The achievements and glories of such men, whether recorded in heart-stirring poems or eloquent histories, are often supposed to arouse and inspire the spirit of emulation. Thus Shakespeare makes his promising but ill-fated young Prince Edward long to emulate the glories of Julius Cæsar,[2] and the recorded exploits of all great men, whether warriors, statesmen, travellers, etc., are often known to inspire those who study them with the true spirit of ardent emulation. But this practical young hero was observing the men and politics of his time at an age when most youths are

[1] "He was proved by every test—by war, by wounds, by painful and depressing maladies, by raging seas, by the imminent and constant risk of assassination, a risk which tried even the adamantine fortitude of Oliver Cromwell. None could discover what that thing was which the Prince of Orange feared."

[2] "Richard III."

studying those of the recorded past; for in Macaulay's words, "since the Roman Emperor, Octavius, the world had seen no such instance of precocious statesmanship." The fact of his believing in predestination, and declaring that "if he were not convinced of this tenet he must become an Atheist or mere Epicurean," explains his fearlessness so thoroughly that Macaulay is perhaps unreasonably surprised at his invincible courage. This doctrine, though professed by many Anabaptists,[1] has been rejected by some Protestant Churches, and thought a dangerous belief. Some persons have merely professed belief in it, but Macaulay evidently considers William of Orange quite sincere, "the single instance" in which "all the sap of his vigorous mind was early drawn away from the speculative to the practical."

After mentioning William's constant friendship for his Dutch fellow-countryman, Bentinck, Macaulay describes most favourably the character of his young wife the Princess Mary, and also that of the excellent Bishop Burnet, who had the moral glory and political credit of reconciling

[1] Sir Walter Scott's "Abbot."

the royal pair after a quarrel which, Macaulay owns, arose from William's faithlessness to her. In fact, the rival princes, James and William, both for a time deserted their young and handsome wives for the sake of two clever mistresses.

In describing this conduct Macaulay slightly reveals his partiality to his favourite; for while justly blaming and ridiculing James for his infatuation about Catherine Sedley, he rather apologetically states of William's mistress, Elizabeth Villiers, that "she possessed talents which well fitted her to partake his cares." Yet probably her society was not cultivated much for the benefit of the State or for political objects; but Macaulay's opinions of the rival princes are so high, and so low respectively that he can seldom, if ever, perceive a merit in the one or a serious fault in the other. He accordingly censures and despises James, while he tries to vindicate William for what was really very much the same conduct in similar circumstances.

"James, in a fit of fondness, determined to make his mistress Countess of Dorchester in her own right, and himself forced the patent into her hands. James went on for a time sinning and

repenting. In his hours of remorse his penances were severe. His queen, Mary of Modena, treasured up to the end of her life the scourge with which he had vigorously avenged her wrongs upon his own shoulders. Nothing but Catherine Sedley's absence could put an end to the long struggle between an ignoble love and an ignoble superstition." [1] Respecting King William's granting a large Irish estate to *his* mistress, whose husband he made Earl of Orkney as a reward for his marriage, Macaulay gently writes: "It was indeed an unfortunate grant, a grant which could not be brought to light without much mischief and much scandal. It was long since William had ceased to be the lover of Elizabeth Villiers, long since he had asked her counsel or listened to her fascinating conversation," etc. [2]

Macaulay gives a very interesting sketch of the celebrated Bishop Burnet, who, during the eventful reigns of Charles II, James, and William, seems to have enjoyed the confidence, friendship, or acquaintance of the three kings, and of the most eminent men during their reigns.

[1] Chap. vi. [2] Chap. xxv.

Macaulay says that this remarkable man was at once "a historian, an antiquary, a theologian, a preacher, a pamphleteer, a debater, and an active political leader," and that he "made himself conspicuous in all these characters."

During such troubled times, and involved with dangerous men of many descriptions, it is a proof of Burnet's moral and intellectual superiority that he was never convicted of any offence by any party, but was universally respected. Thus Macaulay is perhaps too severe when describing him as "indiscreet, talkative, always blabbing secrets, asking impertinent questions, and obtruding unasked advice." This last fault, if it can be so considered, was probably often his painful duty at times of great excitement, and among men of reckless unscrupulousness. On the whole, however, Macaulay highly esteems Burnet, though he scarcely praises him as much as he deserves, even from his own account of his many great and rare qualities.[1]

Burnet's history of his own times displays

[1] Macaulay thus notices in noble language Burnet's generous intercession with King William in behalf of Lord Rochester: "Burnet had been deeply injured by him, and revenged himself as became a Christian divine" (Chap. xi.).

a tolerance, a love of justice, and, above all, a power of perceiving merits in opponents and errors in partisans truly creditable to his heart and judgment, and which of course render his opinions most valuable to a studious posterity. He, however, like all moderate men, soon offended James II, and was sharply ridiculed by Dryden as the Buzzard,[1] who, however, despite his sarcastic genius, could lay little to his charge:—

"Prompt to assail and careless of defence,
Invulnerable in his impudence,
He dares the world, and eager of a name,
He thrusts about and jostles into fame."

These lines might yet represent an energetic, fearless man resolved to do his duty, and becoming famous despite dangerous times and numerous enemies. Such he evidently was according to Macaulay, who pronounces him a "thoroughly honest man," and that "his nature was kind, generous, and forgiving." His tolerant spirit and sound common-sense in respecting all whose "lives were pure"

[1] "Hind and Panther."

among religious and political opponents, prove him, according to Macaulay, to have been far in advance of his age in spirit and thought. His eloquence in the pulpit was so remarkable that many modern divines and congregations have ample reason to envy his great talents in this respect, and to regret their extreme rarity.

"In the pulpit the effect of Burnet's discourses, which were delivered without any notes, was heightened by a noble figure, and by pathetic action. He was often interrupted by the deep hum of his audience, and when after preaching out the hour-glass, which in those days was part of the furniture of the pulpit, he held it up in his hand, the congregation clamorously encouraged him to go on till the sand had run off once more." [1]

In reading Macaulay's version of all the errors and imprudences of James II, in England especially, it seems surprising how many sensible, loyal, and popular men surrounded the obstinate King who yet persisted in disregarding them completely. Archbishop

[1] Chap. vii.

Sancroft, Bishops Burnet and Stillingfleet among English Churchmen, Lords Clarendon, Rochester, and Halifax among statesmen, vainly offered advice and counsel; their loyalty was then not suspected by the King, yet their opinions he utterly despised. Although he tried to win over the Puritans and Dissenters, Macaulay considers that the majority, even of them, viewed him with well-merited distrust; for James's steady hostility to the Anglican Church was not, Macaulay says, caused by its intolerance to other Churches, but chiefly because of all other religions in his kingdom it was the most formidable foe to his own. It seems evident from history, so ably examined and explained by Macaulay, that James had no more idea of establishing a general toleration than a most ignorant fanatic. It was supremacy which he desired for his own Church, even in a land where it was only believed in by a minority, and in which, when he began to reign, it was scarcely tolerated.

In reading Macaulay's account of James's imprudence in offending his most loyal sub-

jects till he alienated them almost without exception, his conduct seems precisely what a most able and unscrupulous anti-Catholic would have suggested and wished him to adopt; for apparently James had an excellent opportunity of obtaining perfect toleration for his own Church without fear of revolution, had he acted with reasonable moderation. Since its last days of supremacy, in Queen Mary's reign, the strife between Anglicans, Puritans, and Independents had been fierce, sanguinary, and violent throughout Great Britain, and was often accompanied by a spirit of bigotry and sectarian bitterness previously unknown among Protestants, at least in British history. All these divisions the Roman Catholic Church had tried to suppress with a stern impartiality; but it had now long been powerless in England, watching with calmness, perhaps with pleasure, what some of its bigoted members might consider the division in Satan's kingdom against itself; for the language of many Anglicans, Puritans, and Independents about each other's alleged errors almost rivalled in bitter enmity all the previous animosity ex-

pressed by Roman Catholics and Protestants against each other.

When James ascended the throne he perceived that the different Protestant denominations spoke and wrote of each other's religious opinions as if they hardly considered themselves connected by a common Christianity. The Roman Catholics, though disliked, suspected, and oppressed for years, had been too few and weak in England to exchange reproaches, repel controversial attacks, or in any way increase popular anger against them. But the chief Protestant divisions had successively ruled in Great Britain and were vehemently accusing each other, perhaps all with more or less truth, of having abused political power to an extent incompatible with their common Christianity.

The old offences committed by and against Roman Catholics were now become almost matters of history, while the mutual wrongs inflicted by these powerful Protestant sects upon each other were more recent in the public mind. Now was the time, Macaulay declares, for a prudent Roman Catholic king, lawfully

ruling a large and disunited Protestant majority, to secure for his co-religionists sufficient toleration to gradually raise them to a level at least with their fellow-subjects. Yet even at this time some Protestants of the highest intellect and education, among them John Locke, opposed tolerating Roman Catholics, alleging that their system completely forbade and precluded its toleration of other religions.

It was in James's power to triumphantly refute this assertion, so injurious to the interests of his faith, by word and deed combined. Macaulay even believes that had he acted with prudence and fairness towards his Protestant subjects the Roman Catholics would, with general consent, have been admitted to office and to Parliament.[1] But James, in his anxiety for Roman Catholic supremacy in a land eminently Protestant, actually reunited the Protestant divisions in a league against his Church as their former and common enemy. Yet, Macaulay says, for some time James and the Episcopalians, or Anglicans, were "bidding against each other"

[1] Chap. vi.

for the support of the Puritans, Independents, etc., who he states had alike endured at different times cruel wrongs from both the House of Stuart and the Episcopal Church. Many leading Dissenters, among whom Macaulay mentions Penn, Lobb, and Alsop, were disposed to join the King, while Baxter, Howe, and others successfully laboured to effect a coalition with the Episcopalians against him. It is difficult for modern readers to understand James's conduct at this time, when censured and warned by the wise Pope Innocent XI, opposed by Episcopalians, now the most influential of his English subjects, and gradually distrusted by Dissenters, whose animosity to Anglicans steadily diminished as they perceived his determination to establish Papal supremacy.

Macaulay gives in the eighth chapter an interesting sketch of the Roman Catholic country gentry, who, he states, were far less fanatical than their co-religionists who guided the King, for they were usually on excellent terms with their Protestant neighbours. Although sincere Catholics they were thoroughly

English in their habits and feelings, having no sympathy with the old enmity of the French, or the yet more bitter resentment of Irish Roman Catholics against England. Macaulay says the cabal that soon acquired complete influence over James was composed of "fanatics and hypocrites," Father Petre representing the former and the Earl of Sunderland the latter. To James's policy, directed by such men, Macaulay emphatically declares the English Roman Catholics owed "three years of lawless and insolent triumph, and one hundred and forty years of subjection and degradation."

Mr. Lecky writes: "The Pope appears to have seen the probability of a reaction, and he wished the King to restrict himself to endeavouring to obtain toleration for his co-religionists, and the English Catholics to abstain as much as possible from political ambition and from every course that could arouse the popular indignation. He had directed the general of the Jesuits to rebuke Father Petre for his ambition, and he positively refused the earnest request of James to raise his favourite to the episcopate and to the purple." [1]

[1] "England in the Eighteenth Century," vol. i.

The history of these "three years of triumph" is comprised in Macaulay's second volume and ends in the tenth chapter. One of its most remarkable episodes was certainly the trial of seven bishops of the Established Church for an alleged libel. The King's anger and the people's joy at their acquittal, Macaulay says, effectually completed the breach between them. Even the Dissenters, who, indeed, had no private reasons for attachment to the accused bishops, yet shared in the general exultation; the grand alliance among nearly all Protestants seemed to be now effected, while moderate Roman Catholics, among whom was the Pope's Nuncio, were both grieved and terrified at the revived animosity of the nation against them.

This remarkable prosecution of the bishops Macaulay terms an event which stands alone in English history, and was the first and last occasion when the love of the Church and the love of freedom were united in perfect harmony. Henceforth, at least during James's reign, the Episcopal Church was more popular, more rooted in the hearts of the English people,

and more associated with just rights, than ever before.

But these feelings, though general in England, were only slightly shared in Scotland, and still less in Ireland. In Scotland, though James was personally as well as politically disliked by the Puritan majority, they yet felt little sympathy for persecuted Episcopalians, as the recollections of their own sufferings under them were fresh in their minds, while the long-past persecutions by the Roman Catholics were comparatively forgotten. The acquittal, therefore, of seven "unhallowed prelates," as some Scottish Puritans called them,[1] roused little enthusiasm or rejoicing among them, although the King well knew he could not reckon on their support or approval.

The birth of a Prince of Wales occurred shortly before the acquittal of the bishops, and these two events, happening about the same time, produced a great effect on the Tory party, hitherto disposed beyond all others to obey the King. Macaulay states that as the child would certainly be brought up a Roman

[1] Scott's "Old Mortality."

Catholic there was now every prospect of a succession of Catholic sovereigns, and this probability aroused revolutionary ideas, even among the loyal.

In the ninth chapter Macaulay gives a long and rather sarcastic account of the way in which some Anglican divines began to justify resistance to arbitrary power, and to question "the divine right" of kings.

"It was now to be seen how the patience which Churchmen professed to have learned from the writings of Paul would stand the test of a persecution by no means so severe as that of Nero. Oppression speedily did what philosophy and eloquence would have failed to do. . . . That logic which, while it was used to prove that Presbyterians and Independents ought to bear imprisonment and confiscation with meekness, had been pronounced unanswerable, seemed to be of very little force when the question was, whether Anglican bishops should be imprisoned and the revenues of Anglican colleges confiscated. It had been often repeated from the pulpits of all the cathedrals in the land that the

apostolic injunction to obey the civil magistrate was 'absolute and universal, &c., that it was impious presumption in man to limit a precept which had been promulgated without any limitation in the Word of God. Now, however, divines, whose sagacity had been sharpened by the imminent danger in which they stood of being turned out of their livings and prebends to make room for Papists, discovered flaws in the reasoning which had formerly seemed so convincing." [1]

The Anglican clergy now began to join their dissenting brethren in protesting against absolute power, and the unpopular King could not resist uttering what was doubtless in his heart, but which greatly irritated his British subjects, that he could now only rely on the Irish. It was evident and natural that the more unpopular he became in Protestant Great Britain the more popular he became in Roman Catholic Ireland. He therefore brought several Irish regiments to England, who had been trained by the energetic and loyal Lord Deputy Tyrconnel.

Macaulay declares in the ninth chapter that

[1] Chap. ix.

of all the errors James committed none was more fatal than summoning Irish soldiers to aid in keeping Britain in subjection. Even many English Roman Catholics shared in the general indignation, well knowing the *national* antipathy of the Irish to England. This act of James seems to have destroyed the last feelings of loyalty that lingered in the minds of his most obedient subjects; and soon afterwards the Dutch Prince of Orange published his famous declaration against the conduct of his royal father-in-law, in which, among many other statements, he insinuated doubts of the legitimacy of the Prince of Wales. Upon this important question Macaulay himself, in the eighth chapter, seems not quite free from doubt, while admitting that posterity fully decided that the prince was really James's son.

The declaration of William against James was soon followed by his landing in England, from which time till the flight of James Macaulay joyfully relates the general defection of the country from the King's cause. As far as England alone was concerned no revolution could have been more complete or

peaceful. Macaulay, instead of having to describe battles, sieges, and campaigns, is exclusively occupied in detailing the various artifices and desertions of the leading statesmen and generals, and among the former Lord Sunderland was one of the most remarkable. This man's character, according to Macaulay, was a striking instance of great abilities united to a nervous, unscrupulous spirit; he was in high favour with James, having deeply offended the Protestants by becoming a Roman Catholic. In him, Macaulay says, "the political immorality of his age was personified in the most lively manner," and his change of faith was doubtless regarded by some as proceeding more from a desire to increase his power than from any strength of religious conviction. He was certainly James's favourite, at least among laymen. Yet even he in the general abandonment of James, Macaulay believes, had some share. He could not avoid perceiving the rapidly approaching downfall of his unfortunate sovereign, and from a revolution he had indeed the worst to expect, unless he could make peace in time with its leader. His nervous terror and

agitation Macaulay depicts in beautiful language and with the imaginative power often found in works of fiction, but rarely in any histories except perhaps the annals of Tacitus. The chief foundation for this pictorial sketch rests apparently on the statement of the Papal Nuncio Adda, that "Sunderland's terror was visible."

"Fear bowed down his whole soul, and was so written in his face that all who saw him could read. It could hardly be doubted that if there were a revolution the evil counsellors who surrounded the throne would be called to a strict account, and among those counsellors he stood in the foremost rank. The loss of his place, his salaries, his pensions was the least he had to dread. His patrimonial mansion and woods at Althorp might be confiscated. He might lie many years in prison. He might end his days in a foreign land, a pensioner on the bounty of France. Even this was not the worst. Visions of an innumerable crowd covering Tower Hill and shouting with savage joy at the sight of the apostate, of a scaffold hung with black, of Burnet reading the prayer for the departing, and of Ketch leaning on the axe with which Russell

and Monmouth had been mangled in so butcherly a fashion, began to haunt the unhappy statesman." [1]

Yet though Macaulay's picturesque description is highly coloured, there appears no reason to believe it much exaggerated, considering the position of Sunderland and the circumstances of his time.

While this veteran statesman was earnestly trying to make his peace with the Deliverer, as Macaulay terms the Prince of Orange, a youthful aspirant to both military and political fame was apparently following at this time a similar course. This was the celebrated John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, whom Macaulay had previously mentioned in the first volume, and his remarkable character and brilliant career evidently possess a peculiar interest for him.

In no description of a historical character does Macaulay show such divided feelings of high admiration and vehement aversion for the same man. From his introduction Macaulay seldom mentions him without a degree of ex-

[1] Chap. ix.

citement in either admiring or blaming him, which is surprising in a writer of his discrimination. He forcibly describes the strange influence, almost control, which he and his intriguing, resolute wife, Sarah Jennings, exercised over the Princess Anne, attributing her abandonment of her father chiefly to the influence of the "arch-deceiver," Churchill. This ambitious pair well knew the folly and unpopularity of James, and were preparing themselves to deal with a new ruler, whose strong will and powerful intellect rivalled their combined talents in the pursuit of political power.

Yet the Churchills seemed to possess between them almost every talent and quality to ensure the triumph of their ambition. Churchill himself, while still very young, possessed a capacity for dissimulation and intrigue, according to Macaulay, rarely equalled among veteran politicians. To these powers he united a dauntless courage and thoroughly calm judgment. Of all British statesmen, old and young, Churchill, possessing so many great qualities, was likely to prove either the most valuable friend or the most dangerous enemy to the Prince of

Orange. During a long time after William's landing in England Churchill was certainly his ally, using all his influence and ability to favour his enterprise.

The whole account of William's easy triumph in England and Wales, the utter desertion of James by all classes of his subjects, and his final flight to France, Macaulay relates with a vivid power and interest, partly owing to his own evident delight at the course of public events; for to his hero's triumph Macaulay's enthusiastic mind attributes all the subsequent peace and prosperity of England; and respecting England alone he certainly seems to prove his case. Not only were Anglicans and all Dissenters reconciled and more free than they had ever permitted each other to be before, but even English Roman Catholics, though suspected and disliked now by nearly all their fellow-countrymen, found that William, partly from policy and partly from natural love of justice, wished them to enjoy far greater toleration than some of his British subjects approved.

His first easy triumph in England before assuming the kingly title is perhaps to Macaulay

the most pleasing part of the whole History. His eager exultation, however, though more enthusiastic than historians usually allow themselves to express, he justified by appealing to historical evidence, both past and present. He compares with great pleasure the general calmness and order which reigned in England from James's flight till King William's coronation, to the strife, excitement, and danger throughout the Continent of Europe even while he was writing this History.

"This revolution, of all revolutions the least violent, has been of all revolutions the most beneficient. Now, if ever, we ought to be able to appreciate the whole importance of the stand made by our forefathers against the House of Stuart. All around us the world is convulsed by the agonies of great nations [1848]. Governments which lately seemed likely to stand for ages have been on a sudden shaken and overthrown. The proudest capitals of Western Europe have streamed with civil blood. All evil passions—the thirst of gain and the thirst of vengeance, the antipathy of class to class, the antipathy of race to race—have broken loose from

the control of Divine and human laws. . . . The truest friends of the people have with deep sorrow owned that interests more precious than any political privilege are in jeopardy, and that it might be necessary to sacrifice even liberty in order to save civilization. Meanwhile, in our island the regular course of government has never been for a day interrupted. The few bad men who longed for licence and plunder have not had the courage to confront for one moment the strength of a loyal nation rallied in firm array round a parental throne. And if it be asked what has made us differ from others, the answer is that we never lost what others are wildly and blindly seeking to regain. It is because we had a preserving revolution in the seventeenth century that we have not had a destroying revolution in the nineteenth."

According to Macaulay, the revolution of 1688 in England was in every respect a model—the peaceful substitution of a wise, brave, tolerant ruler resolved to defend and maintain the legal and natural rights of his voluntary subjects, in place of a King whose reckless injustice,

tyranny, and cruelty had justly cost him his birthright.

The complete alliance between the Protestant sects in England against James, whose religion only represented a small minority of his English subjects, was doubtless the chief cause of the revolution in England being so peaceful and so bloodless. Of all Englishmen few indeed regretted James's deposition except the Roman Catholics, many of whom had long deplored their King's folly and injustice, probably apprehending the inevitable result. Their "three years" of religious toleration had, unhappily for them, been associated with an unjust and absurd political supremacy to which the moderate and reasonable among them could not believe themselves fairly entitled. The revolution not only destroyed their shortlived supremacy, but again reduced them to their former position of a disliked, insulted minority, who though not actually persecuted for their religion, yet endured many civil disabilities and restrictions for that cause alone. Of all King William's new subjects the English Roman Catholics were perhaps most to be pitied, but

they were so few and so afraid of offending the triumphant Protestants of every denomination, that all, from the ducal Norfolk family to the poorest peasant or artisan, remained perfectly quiet amid the general rejoicing.

Yet William's complete triumph in England was evidently caused more by the general detestation incurred by James than by personal popularity. The banished King, in fact, had done nearly everything in his power, though far from willingly, to make his rival thoroughly welcome to the English nation, as Macaulay eloquently proves, greatly to his own satisfaction.

But Scotland and Ireland soon offered far greater trials both to William's skill and genius and consequently to Macaulay's patience and impartiality. The Presbyterian majority in Scotland, he says, "rose upon their tyrants"; but most of the Highlanders, in whom Macaulay, unlike Walter Scott, can see nothing interesting, romantic, or attractive, were by no means inclined to obey the new Government. These brave mountaineers were now as ably commanded by the celebrated general John Grahame of Claverhouse, Lord Dundee, as their ancestors

had been by his kinsman James Grahame, Marquis of Montrose, and each in behalf of the unfortunate House of Stuart.

Upon the curious fact of Lowland generals successfully commanding Highlanders, Macaulay makes some valuable remarks. He emphatically declares that it was precisely because these two leaders were *not* Highlanders that they were able to manage them so well; for such was the jealousy, he says, between the different Highland clans that they would never have obeyed one another, and far more willingly obeyed a "distinguished stranger." [1]

That there is much truth in this statement seems evident from the proofs he gives from historical facts; yet he surely exaggerates in describing what he apparently thinks the just aversion of Lowlanders to Highlanders. He declares that nine out of ten Scottishmen merely regarded the picturesque Highland costume "as the dress of a thief," and also avers that a Highlander in his plaid was, in Edinburgh or Glasgow, an object of the same horror and aversion as an Indian in his war paint is to

[1] Chap. xii.

the British colonists of Philadelphia and Boston.[1] If such were really the feelings entertained by one section of the Scottish people towards the other, it is scarcely possible to believe Scott's statements in his historical novels,[2] the value of which, "even as histories," Macaulay himself admits;[3] for Scott declares it was a frequent custom among Edinburgh and Glasgow citizens to employ as apprentices for a time the young Highland chiefs, and between these tradesmen and the clans who trusted them there must therefore have been often a friendly and even confidential intercourse. No doubt, as Scott describes, there was an immense difference in many respects between Highland and Lowland Scotch, and, the former being usually poor and warlike, the latter comparatively rich and peaceful, their quarrels would certainly involve plunder and robbery.

But to compare their social and political relations to those between British colonists and Indian heathens is hardly fair. Indeed, when

[1] Chap. xiii.

[2] "Waverley" and "Fair Maid of Perth."

[3] "Essay on History."

Macaulay himself says that Highlanders cheerfully obeyed and trusted Lowland officers in preference to their own, such a fact in itself proves that the animosity between Highlanders and Lowlanders could never be justly compared to those feelings of utter alienation and antipathy which will always animate civilized men towards armed and desperate savages. American Indians would hardly obey the leadership of British colonists against their fellow-settlers, nor probably has such an idea been ever entertained by them or the colonists since the discovery of America.

It should be remembered also that for centuries the Highlanders and Lowlanders had professed precisely the same form of Christianity. Even after the Reformation a minority of the Highlanders, among whom the Argyll family and clan of Campbells were the most powerful, became Presbyterians like the Lowlanders, while the majority remained Roman Catholics, and a very small minority of Lowlanders also adhered to the ancient faith. Thus the Argyll family and their clan with some other Highlanders had, even in Charles I's reign, opposed the Highland

majority both in religion and politics, and were therefore in constant league with Lowlanders against them.

The Highland and Lowland Scotch, despite their different habits, customs, language, etc., had for centuries been united by a common Christianity and acknowledged the same King; the Reformation, by dividing and therefore alienating the Highlanders from each other, decidedly inclined them to make frequent alliances with the Lowlanders for religious or political objects. Yet the Highlanders, despite their quarrels both among themselves and with the Lowlanders, could never consider the latter as invaders, or as their natural foes and destroyers, which the American Indians might justly term their European conquerors.

Both Scott and Macaulay describe the state of Scotland immediately after King William's accession, and in some respects the Tory novelist and Whig historian agree, in others they indeed differ widely. They each, however, praise William's extreme prudence, justice, and moderation; and perhaps Scott's approval, expressed with steady discrimination, would have gratified

the calm, judicious prince, as much as, if not more than, the eloquent enthusiasm of his historical admirer.

In "Old Mortality," perhaps the most useful and valuable of his novels, Scott devotes part of the thirty-seventh chapter to describing the state of parties in Scotland just after the successful English revolution. In this instructive sketch he mentions three parties: the triumphant Whigs, comprising the majority of Presbyterian Lowlanders and the Highland Campbells who cordially acknowledged King William; the Jacobites, chiefly Highlanders, and a few Episcopalians, some of whom were in arms under Lord Dundee; lastly, the Covenanters, who, though cruelly persecuted by James, yet refused to obey his rival, because he would not comply with the Solemn League and Covenant, binding him to discourage at least, if not to persecute, the Episcopalians who had summoned him to their rescue.

Macaulay, usually indignant with all opposing or giving trouble to his hero, warmly declares that the general voice of Scotland "effectually drowned the growl of this hateful faction." [1]

[1] Chap. x.

But before their "growl" was silenced they were rather formidable, for some of them actually intrigued with their ancient foes, Dundee and the Highlanders, to restore King James, and had not William "prudently temporized with them," as Walter Scott says, their discontent would have soon led to open rebellion.

It is doubtful indeed if "the general voice" could have completely checked a sect so bold, uncompromising, and earnest as the Scottish Covenanters, whose firm zeal and constancy had withstood the most violent and relentless persecution. Their sullen opposition to the tolerant King was probably more effectually discouraged, as Scott says, by his allowing them to abuse him and his government as much as they pleased, than by either popular indignation or legal severities; for the historical novelist states they were "a sect strong in numbers and vehement in their political opinions," and if united to the Highlanders under the able and gallant Dundee, or under any other able general, their resistance to William might have been very formidable. But as Scott and Macaulay both declare, the prudent policy of King William

gradually overcame their opposition, "their zeal, unfanned by persecution, died gradually away, and they sank into a remnant of harmless enthusiasts," [1] without the power or perhaps inclination to attempt actual revolution.

Macaulay relates Dundee's brilliant campaign against King William, terminating with his victory and death at the battle of Killiecrankie; but the historian's sympathies are decidedly more with the defeated general Mackay, "the stout old Puritan" entreating his soldiers not to swear, than with the victorious Highlanders; yet he cannot quite divest himself of some admiration for the fallen hero, when recording his last words, exulting in his sovereign's victory even at the cost of his own life. He writes finally of Dundee that "his name is yet mentioned with respect by that large class of persons who think that there is no excess of wickedness for which courage and ability do not atone." [2]

Scott, Professor Aytoun, and some other Scottish writers, however, certainly do not belong to this class, while taking a very different view of Dundee's character from

[1] "Old Mortality." [2] Chap. xiii.

Macaulay, though Scott admits his being cruel and vindictive, as well as sincere and generous. But Macaulay exposes himself often to the charge he brings against other historians, and against Hume especially, of strong, though not unprincipled, partiality; for in the two instances of Cromwell and Dundee, he describes the latter shooting a single prisoner named Brown, and also the drowning of two Presbyterian women by the Scottish Jacobites, with the utmost care and pathos. But Cromwell's cruelties to the Irish were even by his own showing far more numerous, and in many cases equally unprovoked. Yet not a single instance is detailed, though his Irish victims, Macaulay admits, were in thousands. Such a powerful impression have Cromwell's courage and ability made upon Macaulay's mind that he makes a few lines describe his fearful massacres, amid which he cannot resist admiring him, and then leaves the subject without giving any instance of his cruelties; he thus avoids deeply irritating his readers against Cromwell, without actually denying or palliating his deeds.

After Dundee's death no serious resistance

was made to William, and Macaulay, in his subsequent sketches of Scottish history, has the pleasing task of relating how successfully, though gradually, the King's tolerant wisdom pacified all parties; yet this pleasant narrative is sadly interrupted by the Glencoe massacre, related in the eighteenth chapter. This terrible crime was eagerly laid to William's charge by many opponents; but Macaulay, who writes on this subject with unusual calmness, gives some reason to believe that this massacre was the combined work of Lords Argyll, Breadalbane, and the Master of Stair—all Scotchmen of rank and influence. He admits, indeed, that this awful atrocity has "cast a dark shade upon William's glory," but believes, and gives others reason to believe, that the King never contemplated, or desired in any way, the commission of a crime which could, even in a political sense, only injure his fame without materially increasing his power or influence.

In this chapter Macaulay again surely exaggerates the English contempt and aversion for Scottish Highlanders, by saying they were regarded in the same light as Kaffirs

or Malay pirates were by Englishmen of his own day. It probably would have been a fairer comparison to have named the Turks or Persians instead of these ignorant savages, for the Scottish mountaineers had belonged for centuries to the very same religion as the English till the Reformation, when a minority only became Protestant, while a minority among the English always remained Roman Catholic. They were, of course, very different not only from the English, but from their fellow-Scottishmen, in habits and language. But had Englishmen considered them merely savages, they would have ignored both their religious and political history. They had all acknowledged the rule of Scottish kings for centuries, though doubtless often troublesome subjects, and when Scotland was united to England under the rule of James I, the Highlanders, without exception, became his subjects as King of Great Britain without the least opposition or discontent.

Scott and Macaulay differ very remarkably in describing the relations of Scottish Highlanders both with their fellow-Scottishmen and with the English. According to Scott, though

these mountaineers were often eager plunderers, irritable, revengeful, and very peculiar in their habits, they were certainly never viewed by their fellow-Scottishmen with the abhorrence which Macaulay implies, as if they were the barbarous enemies of all religion and civilization.

Even when praising the Highland scenery,[1] Macaulay, unlike Scott, can see nothing in Highland traditions, manners, and customs either interesting or romantic. He describes the beauties of the Highlands like a man of taste, but Scott describes them like a lover and a man of taste combined. Macaulay, while describing Highland scenery in beautiful language, evidently prefers " the comforts and luxuries " of a London club, which he mentions with delight at the same time; while Scott, when introducing his readers to the romantic legends, characters, and scenery of the Highlands, seems thoroughly satisfied.

Although King William encountered fierce opposition from the Highlanders and sullen discontent from some Lowland Covenanters, his difficulties in Ireland were far more serious, and demanded all his military abilities to overcome.

[1] Chap. xiii.

Macaulay, with keen delight, records his bravery at the battle of the Boyne, while contrasting it with the irresolution, if not cowardice, of his unfortunate father-in-law. The cause of this irresolution Macaulay explains more clearly than any historian has yet done, by attributing it chiefly to James's false position at the head of Irish Roman Catholics, who detested English as much as they did Irish Protestants, viewing them as their national as well as religious foes. Thus they only agreed to acknowledge James on condition that he would undo the work of his ancestors, and restore all lands acquired by his fellow-countrymen to the descendants of his and their conquered enemies.

James's reluctance to grant this demand, to which he at length submitted rather than consented, Macaulay describes with great interest, but he expresses little compassion for the unfortunate King, whose previous folly and cruelty always prevent his deserving that sympathy which his position would otherwise have obtained. Yet James was soon at the head of a large majority of the Irish, while William was supported by British and Dutch troops, as well as by the Irish Protestants.

But the dissension in James's camp between the few English adhering to him and the Irish, who now chiefly supported him, was a striking contrast to the unanimity prevailing among William's mixed forces. The spirit and energy of Tyrconnel had, however, enlisted thousands of Irish on the side of James, while the Roman Catholic clergy strove with remarkable success to convince their people that all national enmity to an English King should now yield to Roman Catholic interests, and therefore they should consider James their lawful King, thus utterly abandoning all lingering hope of national independence.

Seldom in history have the clergy, by eloquence and reasoning alone, so completely influenced their hearers as the Irish Catholic priesthood did on this occasion. Macaulay lays much stress upon their success, and details a remarkable proof in the interesting case of the native Irish prince, Baldearg O'Donnell. This man's family, descended from a long line of Irish kings or independent chiefs, had been banished from Ireland and fled to Spain. He earnestly wished to visit Ireland during the war between

the two foreign usurpers, as he considered both James and William to be.[1] He had earnest hopes now of regaining the ancient rights of his family, and this idea became known to the Spanish Government, which, being far more anxious, like the Irish priesthood, to see the Roman Catholic House of Stuart restored than to revive ancient Irish independence, positively forbade Baldearg to visit Ireland. He, however, escaped from Spain and landed in Ireland, where he found some adherents wishing to acknowledge his claims, but the great majority, even of his fellow-Irish Catholics, obeyed their priests by acknowledging James II, while the Irish Protestants were hostile both to his religion and race. He also found that the English Viceroy, Richard Talbot, the energetic champion of Roman Catholicism in Ireland, trusted alike by James and the clergy, had been created Earl of Tyrconnel, a title belonging to his own family.

Baldearg's subsequent conduct proved his deep and not unnatural animosity against the

[1] "No expression used by Baldearg indicated that he considered himself a subject. His notion evidently was that the House of O'Donnell was as truly and as indefeasibly royal as the House of Stuart" (Chap. xvi.).

House of Stuart, the ancient conqueror of his race, but now the champion of their religion. Without abandoning his faith he actually joined and served under King William, the conqueror of his hereditary enemy, but not till the war in Ireland was over. Till then, Macaulay says, he "kept aloof" from both parties, perhaps hoping that the two invaders might so weaken each other by a long, destructive war that he might yet recover at least a part of his ancestral territory. But King William's complete and rapid triumph destroyed this hope, and with Baldearg's submission to the Dutch Prince disappeared the last regal pretension of the ancient Irish House of O'Donnell.

Macaulay, after detailing this remarkable occurrence, dwells much on William's efforts to pacify Ireland in reality as well as in appearance; but such a task was beyond the wisdom and power even of that sagacious prince. In this attempt, indeed, he was nearly as much thwarted by his friends as by his foes; for neither Irish Roman Catholics nor Protestants at this time understood, apparently, religious toleration, or if they did they agreed in thinking

it right to deny it to each other. Thus, as Macaulay shows, the opposition in both Scotland and Ireland to King William, though alike overcome, left the two countries very differently situated. In Scotland the moderate Presbyterians were supreme, but though they detested the Jacobites, who were mostly composed of Anglicans and Roman Catholics, they had no desire to persecute them, as some of the more violent of their party, especially the Covenanters, wished and believed it their duty to do.

Scott and Macaulay alike agree in this account of Scottish feelings and politics after the accession of William, who, to some extent, inspired, or at least shared with the ruling party, principles of toleration unknown to either vanquished Jacobites or disappointed Covenanters.

Macaulay says that William wrote thus to the Presbyterian National Assembly of Scotland: "We expect that your management may be such that we may have no reason to repent of what we have done. We never could be of the mind that violence was suited to the advancing of religion, nor do we intend that our authority shall ever be the tool to the irregular passions of any party.

Moderation is what religion enjoins, what neighbouring Churches expect from you, and what we recommend to you." Macaulay adds that the Assembly "returned a grateful and respectful answer to the royal letter, and assured his Majesty that they had suffered too much from oppression ever to be oppressors." [1]

But in Ireland King William's political triumph did not introduce his own tolerant principles. In a moral sense he might be said scarcely to have won a victory, for he left Irish Catholics and Protestants hating each other as bitterly as when he landed among them, and was quite unable to inspire either opponents or partisans with his own temperate spirit. He had found the Catholic majority almost on the point of exterminating the Protestant minority, for which they had, Macaulay says, obtained James II's reluctant sanction, and he left the Protestants ruling and oppressing the Catholic majority. Though he could lead Irish Protestants to victory and establish their political authority, it was beyond his power to morally influence them, or induce them to treat conquered foes with the justice which

[1] Chap. xvi.

he was at this time trying to obtain for the oppressed Protestant minority in France.

Bishop Burnet's statements, from which Macaulay often quotes, prove how just were King William's tolerant views, though often as little understood or obeyed by his adherents as by his foes. In fact, he encountered Roman Catholic bigotry as it were on the battlefield, and in all his victories he practically subdued its spirit; or rather was able to lessen it by the increase of his political influence. The bigotry of Anglicans, Presbyterians, or Covenanters, arising chiefly among his own political partisans, he had to oppose by shrewd policy, prudent temporising, and in individual cases perhaps by argument or persuasion. In a spirit more worthy of the nineteenth than of the seventeenth century, he steadily discouraged religious fanaticism alike in peace and war, even when that spirit was shown by earnest, estimable men in his own behalf.

His feelings in this respect, and indeed his views generally, were far more appreciated in Scotland than in Ireland, after the submission of both countries to his authority. The moderate Scottish Presbyterians found themselves in the

very creditable position of being alternately opposed or blamed by the intolerant of all denominations, not excepting their own, who thus agreed in logically condemning their own toleration by vehemently opposing its extension to others. On this subject the eminent Whig and Tory Scotchmen, Macaulay and Scott, entirely agree, so that posterity have every reason to believe the accuracy of their statements.

Macaulay, in describing the celebrated Presbyterian clergyman William Carstairs, whose abilities and counsel had great influence with William in ruling Scotland, seems rather perplexed what to say, and his account of him does not seem very consistent.[1] He was sincerely devoted to the King, and used all his influence in his favour, for which Macaulay admires and praises him.

In Ireland, which King William never visited after his accession, those in favour of moderate measures were in a powerless minority, and according to Macaulay the triumphant "Englishry," comprising British, Anglican, and Presbyterian colonists, tried by legal severities

[1] Macaulay says in a footnote, vol. iii. chap. xiii.: "Carstairs, though an honest and pious man in essentials, had his full share of the wisdom of the serpent."

and restrictions to revenge themselves on the conquered majority, from whose fury they had so narrowly escaped total extermination. But Macaulay, who usually describes religious fanaticism with remarkable fairness, shows that in the case of Ireland it was far more in the interests of humanity that the Protestant minority should have triumphed. Though actuated by a bigoted resentment scarcely less violent than that of their enemies, they were literally unable to gratify their persecuting desires, which revealed themselves in vexatious legal enactments, which could seldom be enforced. But the Irish Roman Catholics were on the very point of extirpating or banishing the Protestant minority when King William's victories turned the scale, and suddenly placed the persecuted few in power over the persecuting many, whose example they tried, but were really unable to follow. Such is the historical picture of Ireland presented by Macaulay at this time, in drawing which he shows a fairness of judgment invaluable in all historical narration, and rarely found in those involving records of religious as well as political dissensions.

Throughout this History the English Jews are very seldom mentioned, for despite their great wealth and peaceful habits, they never aspired to political influence. In Chap. xv. Macaulay mentions a proposal to tax them heavily after the Irish campaign, which idea was abandoned on the Jews declaring they would leave England if this tax was imposed, but he does not state King William's views upon this question. It was reserved, however, for the nineteenth century to revive throughout Europe generally, though not universally, an interest in the Jews which, for a long period, had comparatively ceased to be felt or at least expressed about them.

After describing the Irish campaign and the pacification of Scotland and Ireland, Macaulay's last chapters are devoted to King William's reign in England before and after the death of his queen. In ruling England, he, according to Macaulay, found constant difficulty, trouble, and opposition, all of which seemed to increase rather than diminish towards the end of his most eventful life and reign. Macaulay relates, with evident regret, the decided opposition of the Primate Sancroft and several bishops to the

authority of William and Mary, finally causing their ejection from their sees, which were then assigned to other prelates, whom Macaulay considers more patriotic as well as more compliant. The celebrated Dr. Tillotson, the friend of the new King and Queen, was made Primate in place of Sancroft, whose anger and grief at his deprivation Macaulay describes without any sympathy; he, however, does justice to the excellent Bishop Ken, who, like Sancroft, had been imprisoned and tried by James II, and yet was now doomed to disgrace and ejection for refusing to acknowledge his victorious rival.

Both Sancroft and Ken after their disgrace lived and died in retirement. The former Macaulay considers a man of peevish, irritable temper, the latter almost a model of a Christian divine. Yet King William apparently neither acknowledged nor valued his high character, or Macaulay would have doubtless gladly mentioned such generosity. It is doubtful if William's cold, stern nature, despite his tolerant mind, enabled him to fully appreciate an honourable opponent, as his remote predecessor Henry IV did in the case of the Bishop of

Carlisle. This prelate had opposed Henry's accession to the throne as earnestly as Ken opposed that of William, both bishops adhering to the deposed kings Richard II and James II. Henry IV, however, pardoned and even praised the Bishop of Carlisle, and this generous clemency Shakespeare records in his own matchless language.[1] It is difficult even for the enthusiastic Macaulay to prove William's generosity towards noble opponents, and he therefore makes the most of his tolerant, enlightened views generally, which were certainly far in advance of his period.

Besides the opposition of the bishops, the triumphant but harassed King encountered a succession of political conspiracies in England. One of the most formidable, Macaulay says, was secretly headed by Marlborough, whether for the

[1] When the Bishop is brought a prisoner before the newly crowned King, the latter exclaims—

"Carlisle, this is your doom:
Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life!
So as thou livest in peace, die free from strife:
For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,
High sparks of honour in thee have I seen."
("Richard II," Act V).

sake of recalling James or of placing the Princess Anne on the throne was a matter of doubt. The influence of the Churchills over the princess was so complete that they first turned her against her father, and afterwards against her sister and brother-in-law. Macaulay's indignation against Anne (who he, perhaps too severely, says "was as culpable as her small faculties" permitted) and against the Churchills is extreme, as their plots, intrigues, and frequent opposition, though detected and foiled, were a constant annoyance to William, after so many dangers had been escaped, and probably saddened the last years of the Queen's life. After her death, however, Macaulay says that Anne and the Churchills suddenly became friendly and loyal to William, and broke off all intrigues with the Jacobites. The Princess Anne was the probable successor to William, whose health was beginning to fail; yet more Jacobite conspiracies were formed, which, though not very formidable, were suppressed with great severity, if not cruelty, most of the leaders being executed. Sir John Fenwick, Sir John Friend, Rookwood, Charnock, and others suffered capital punishment, for to

individuals William was certainly far less merciful than to communities. Yet, even from Macaulay's own statement, some of these Jacobite prisoners might have been spared without danger to the Government. Of course, those convicted of murderous intentions, like Charnock and Barclay, were unworthy of clemency; but in the case of Fenwick and others the highest penalty of the law was needlessly inflicted. The Jacobite cause, as Macaulay shows, was very unpopular throughout England, and only from men capable of committing murder was there any real danger to William's authority.

In relating the execution of some of these leaders, that of Sir John Fenwick especially, Macaulay's party spirit, or hero-worship, is strikingly displayed. When Monmouth was executed by James II Macaulay strongly blamed the King for seeing his victim without sparing him, which he calls an outrage upon humanity and decency. But Monmouth, besides heading a rebellion, had openly declared James a murderer, calling on his subjects to bring him to justice as such, by a printed proclamation. Sir John Fenwick merely joined a conspiracy to

recall a King once his lawful sovereign, and whom he believed no Act of Parliament could render otherwise. He, like Monmouth, was tried for high treason and sentenced to death; yet William admitted him to an interview, while his wife, Lady Mary, presented a petition for her husband's life, but in vain.

William was evidently resolved to execute Fenwick, and executed he accordingly was. Macaulay says (vol. iv.) that Fenwick "found by terrible proof, that of all the Jacobites, the most desperate assassins not excepted, he was the only one for whom William felt an intense personal aversion." But the only cause given for a hatred so deadly was that Sir John once stared rudely at Queen Mary without saluting her, which Macaulay terms "a brutal and cowardly affront." Yet this surely hardly equalled the insults offered to her father when a fugitive by some fishermen, which Macaulay considers trifling; nor did it exceed the marked rudeness which William and Mary desired and even ordered to be shown to the Princess Anne on account of some dispute between them (vol. iv. chap. xviii.). Yet Macaulay never blames his hero for thus "out-

raging humanity" in the case of Fenwick, who gave him far less offence than Monmouth had given to James both in word and act. Indeed, Macaulay cannot resist admiring the "gentle" manner with which William received Lady Mary Fenwick's petition for mercy to her husband, though a pardon or a commutation, granted in the rudest and roughest possible way, would have been more worthy of a fair historian to notice and to praise. "Strenuous efforts were made to save Fenwick. His wife threw herself at William's feet and offered him a petition. He took the petition, and said very gently that it should be considered, but that the matter was one of public concern." [1]

In describing the executions of King William's enemies, Macaulay nearly always suppresses details, which would not be surprising, perhaps, were this silence not such a contrast to the harrowing and grievous particulars he often gives of executions sanctioned by King James. The horrors of the Bloody Assize under the auspices of Judge Jeffries, the heroism of the victims, and the stern cruelty of James are described with a force and eloquence calculated to produce the

[1] "History of England," vol. iv. chap. xxii.

deepest emotion in the minds of all thoughtful readers. But the executions of William's Jacobite prisoners, like Cromwell's Irish cruelties, are merely recorded as matters of history, without details, and the sympathies of readers are seldom solicited. Though Macaulay is an enthusiastic Liberal throughout both Essays and History, yet his strong admiration for certain persons occasionally makes him view their despotic acts with surprising indulgence, if not favour. Like Milton, he approves of Cromwell's dismissing the Parliament and assuming supreme authority—proceedings which, but for the ardent fidelity of his soldiers, might have caused his legal execution by this same Parliament in whose service he had first risen to power.

"Those elements of force which, when the civil war broke out, had appeared arrayed against each other, were combined against him—all the Cavaliers, the great majority of the Roundheads, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, England, Scotland, Ireland. Yet such was his genius and resolution that he was able to overpower and crush everything that crossed his path, to make himself

more absolute master of his country than any of her legitimate kings had been, and to make his country more dreaded and respected than she had been during many generations under the rule of her legitimate kings. Everything yielded to the vigour and ability of Cromwell." [1]

In the case of King William, his other great favourite, Macaulay seems puzzled what to write respecting his partiality for the Dutch and his desire to retain these foreign troops in England. In this case, Macaulay's own partisan, the British Whigs—Cavendishes, Russells, etc.—naturally opposed retaining Dutch regiments in a country which had voluntarily made William its King, and whose presence made England seem like a conquered land guarded by a foreign garrison. King William's bitter opposition to the united feelings of English Whigs and Tories on this question Macaulay regrets, while saying that his conduct was founded on a sentiment "amiable and respectable"; yet he cannot bring himself either to praise or condemn the Whig opposition to his hero, and merely says that the Whig leaders upon this subject "were intractable." [2]

[1] History, vol. i. [2] Chap. xxiv.

In this important case Macaulay's Liberalism, which makes him side with the Whigs, rather contends with his devoted admiration for King William. He thus cannot censure either party with his usual eloquence; he admires and respects both too much to condemn either of them very strenuously, so he gently blames, or, rather, mildly regrets, William's conduct, while hardly praising or blaming his Whig opponents.

Macaulay describes the last days of the rival Kings, who died within two or three years of each other, in an affecting manner. "James, on Good Friday, 1701, suffered a shock from which he had never recovered. While he was listening in his chapel to the solemn service of the day he fell down in a fit, and remained long insensible. Some people imagined that the words of the anthem which his choristers were chanting had produced in him emotions too violent to be borne by an enfeebled body and mind. For that anthem was taken from the plaintive elegy in which a servant of the true God, chastened by many sorrows and humiliations, banished, homesick, and living on the bounty of strangers, bewailed the fallen throne and the desolate Temple

of Sion: 'Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens; the crown is fallen from our head. Wherefore dost Thou forget us for ever?'"[1] Yet though James died abroad a dethroned exile, and William in England after the full accomplishment of his triumph and at the height of power and success, they were both evidently unhappy men. King William's death was hastened, if not mainly caused, by a fall from his horse. Macaulay, the Whig historian, writes sympathetically: "William was ambling on a favourite horse named Sorrel. Sorrel stumbled on a small hill. The King fell off and broke his collar-bone. He felt that his time was short, and grieved with a grief such as only noble spirits feel to think that he must leave his work but half finished." The Tory novelist Walter Scott makes Hugh Redgauntlet, the Jacobite leader of his invention, thus mention the fatal accident: "The usurper William went forth to hunt, and thought, doubtless, that it was by an act of his own royal pleasure that the horse of his murdered victim was prepared for his

[1] "History of England," vol. v.

kingly sport. But Heaven had other views, and before the sun was high a stumble of that very animal over an obstacle so inconsiderable as a mole-hillock cost the haughty rider his life and the usurped crown." Scott adds: "Like other Jacobites in his inveteracy against the memory of King William, he had adopted the party opinion that the monarch, on the day he had his fatal accident, rode upon a horse once the property of the unfortunate Sir John Friend, executed in 1696." [1] Scott, again, in "Waverley," also an historical novel, introduces a Jacobite laird proposing a toast to the mole as, "the little gentleman in black velvet who did such service in 1702." [2] William, though he had lived to overcome all his avowed enemies, was doomed to spend his last years among those he disliked and feared more than any of the numerous foes whom he had slain or banished, and his chief opponent was his powerful subject Marlborough. Macaulay states that "if William feared anything living on earth, that thing was Marlborough" (chap. xviii.). But instead of banishing him, he was apparently compelled not

[1] "Redgauntlet," chap. viii. [2] "Waverley," chap. vi.

only to endure his presence but to show him favour and honour. Yet it was Marlborough who, allied with the Princess Anne and many of the British nobility, had strongly opposed William on his tenderest point—preference for his Dutch fellow-countrymen and the desire to retain an armed force of them in England. This desire, though it deeply offended the King's most loyal English adherents, Macaulay considers a little more than an amiable weakness (chap. xxv.), though owning it was the greatest mistake of his whole life.

After Queen Mary's death and the departure of the Dutch troops a few years later, Macaulay describes the last days of William, who trusted his Dutch favourite, Bentinck, Duke of Portland, more than any of his British subjects; while the ambitious hopes of Anne and the Marlboroughs strengthened daily with his increasing weakness. Through a most eventful life William had vanquished or foiled open enemies with marvellous success, yet was destined to see approaching with his own death the future glory and triumph of the only man he ever feared. Marlborough, the skilful, ambitious politician, the

able, dauntless general and the dangerous subject, was, according to Macaulay, the evil genius of his prosperous days. He never opposed William till after his triumph was apparently complete, yet from that time till his death Marlborough haunted him to the last. The indignation with which Macaulay usually mentions him, while admiring his brilliant talents and fearless courage, seems at least partly caused by his constant opposition to his hero, an opposition peculiarly wounding to William because so wary, so skilful, and so strangely beyond even his power and energy to repress or baffle.

Macaulay's splendid History ends with William's death, and his friend Dean Milman much regrets[1] that he did not live to write the history of Queen Anne's reign. But unless Macaulay had somewhat changed his views, this task would scarcely have been a pleasing one to himself. For throughout her reign the grand figure of Marlborough was still pre-eminent; whether in peace or war, this man, "so wise and so wicked," as Macaulay terms him, was the hero of his nation and the glory of his age.

[1] "Memoir of Lord Macaulay."

Macaulay's history, in combined learning, comprehensiveness, eloquence, and intense interest, almost fulfilled his own description, written many years before it, of a model English history.[1]

It appeared at a time when the British reading public enjoyed the most delightful and varied works of fiction, and yet in vivid interest, independent of historical value, it rivalled them all. The profound yet most interesting romances of Walter Scott, followed by the brilliant masterpieces of Dickens and Thackeray, and the political novels of Disraeli were all in different ways attracting public interest and admiration. Among or soon after these brilliant works appeared a British History, recounting the same facts and describing the same characters with which all educated people were familiar, yet newly endowed with a vivid interest and a dramatic power rarely surpassed by works whose chief claim on public attention were those fascinating qualities with which Macaulay accompanied and adorned the truths of history.

[1] "A history of England written in this manner would be the most fascinating book in the language. It would be more in request at the circulating libraries than the last new novel" ("Essay on Mackintosh").

Like his own description of Bacon, admiring and studying the wonders of reality in preference to those of fiction, Macaulay both found and displayed in history much of the charm and interest of a romance. In fact, he enthusiastically sketches before composition what in a great measure he finally accomplished. "The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with colouring from romance, ballad, and chronicle. Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest, from the royal cloth of state to the den of the outlaw, from the throne of the legate to the chimney-corner where the begging friar regaled himself. Palmers, minstrels, crusaders, the stately monastery, with good cheer in its refectory and the High Mass in its chapel, the manor-house with its hunting and hawking, the tournament, with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets, and the cloth of gold, would give truth and light to the representation. . . . The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason." . . . A historian such as we have been attempting to describe would indeed be an intel-

lectual prodigy. In his mind, powers scarcely compatible with each other must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner see another Shakespeare or another Homer." [1] Yet despite this depressing conclusion, Macaulay himself, in his subsequent History, resembled his beautiful picture more closely than was ever previously accomplished in all the annals of literature. Thus his historical personages seem as real and natural in both act and thought as if described by an eye-witness or personal acquaintance. Instead of imaginary heroes, villains, innocent sufferers, and heroic avengers, involved with mediocre personages, introduced as contrasts to the more striking characters of an ideal romance, Macaulay exhibits the same almost unlimited variety in the men and women of British history. He describes their acts, motives, thoughts, and feelings with the keen interest of an author, and usually with the accuracy of a conscientious mind, guided and enlightened by almost every advantage which natural genius, united to vast learning, can bestow. His great error, perhaps his only one

[1] Essay on History.

of much consequence, seems to be his ardent, vehement, though not unscrupulous, admiration and detestation for certain individuals.

Without going so far as to say of Macaulay's "hero-worship," as Dr. Johnson says of Shakespeare's liking for a quibble, that "it was the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it,"[1] this weakness must surely be termed a serious fault in his History. His warmest admirers will regret that he can scarcely blame some people for doing much the same as what he censures with truthful eloquence in others. He is indeed far too honest to vindicate his favourites for indefensible acts, yet his admiration for them is so great that he can scarcely, as it were, force himself to censure them. He records their crimes or errors very briefly, as if doing so was a painful duty, and usually without comment or detail.[2]

[1] Preface to "Shakespeare."

[2] Let readers compare his brief sketches of Cromwell's Irish career, and of the political executions in William III's reign, with his detailed and most pathetic description of the cruelties authorized by James II and Claverhouse, in proof of this statement.

Though Macaulay's ardent admirers will probably admit that he was a warm partisan, yet he was so in the highest sense of that word. His consistent purpose, manifested alike in Essays and History, was to enlarge human knowledge, to calm, and if possible reconcile, political and religious animosities, and to civilize as well as instruct every mind he addressed. In his History he recognizes certain persons who, he believes, have done wonders for the moral and social benefit of the British nation, and others who, he believes, both did and wished to do great evil to the best interests of their country and of their race. When writing, therefore, about these people, he apparently thinks it right to expose with his utmost power the crimes of the latter, thus leaving a justly odious impression of their characters and motives on his readers' minds.

But respecting the guilt and errors of those to whom he believes their country's gratitude is due, he is comparatively silent. Without positively denying them, he apparently thinks them of slight consequence compared with the immense good these persons accomplished, and

thus he wishes that in the minds of posterity all their faults should "lie gently on them."[1] This partiality, however, has been justly blamed, perhaps sometimes exaggerated, and made a pretence for underrating the high merits of his splendid History.

Yet despite this fault, arising more probably from the enthusiasm of hero-worship than ordinary party spirit, Macaulay's British History is surely one of the most valuable books, not only of the nineteenth century but of modern times. In it are combined the taste of a classic student, the knowledge of an accomplished scholar, the varied learning of the historian, with the refined feelings and civilized ideas of the modern man of the world. Indeed, the contrast between his private tastes and individual sentiments was one of his remarkable peculiarities. His mind specially delighted to recall the ancient glories of pagan Greece and Rome, while in his ideas and feelings he was decidedly in advance even of the progressive age in which he lived among refined English society.

While keenly appreciating classic works,

[1] Shakespeare, "King Henry VIII."

with the discernment of an enlightened man of the nineteenth century, he was able to instruct the most learned men of his own time by his comprehensive knowledge of all its chief events. His great work appeared at a period of domestic peace and general education, amid the critical world of British readers, and was read, studied, praised, and blamed by differing political and religious denominations. Instead of being chiefly confined or restricted to any particular party, it addressed all his fellow-countrymen, and indeed interested most educated minds throughout the civilized world. Although distrusted by many for its undeniable partiality, it became, as it deserved, universally popular. This popularity, according to his accomplished biographer, has increased rather than diminished of late years, as the progress of time has confirmed and illustrated the truth of many of his opinions and views.[1]

It is probable that his History's peculiar and almost sensational interest rather aroused

[1] "Macaulay's works are universally known. The number who read his books is still [1876] rapidly increasing" (Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay," vol. i.).

at first a feeling of distrust, its brilliant style being so unlike that of ordinary historical narration, and more resembling the pictorial beauty of romance, or the attractive power of a delightful novel.[1]

Yet most readers find that Macaulay combines every attraction of style and language with sound common-sense and wonderfully extensive learning. While claiming the attention of all learned and profound minds, he also attracts the frivolous or ill-informed to a degree probably never equalled by any previous historian.

When his work appeared the British public knew their country's history chiefly from the writings of Hume, Clarendon, Tytler, and Robertson, and to some extent from those of Shakespeare and Walter Scott. Hume's great work, though generally admired and read, was censured and probably distrusted by many owing to its author's rejection of Christianity. Most other British

[1] "The successive volumes of Macaulay's History were run after as the Waverley Novels might have been at the zenith of their author's fame. Living England talked for the time of nothing but Macaulay's 'England'" (M'Carthy's "History of Our Own Times," vol. ii. chap. xxix.).

historians were comparatively uninteresting. The historical dramas and novels of Shakespeare and Scott mingled real and imaginary characters together with marvellous success, but Macaulay produced a work which without the aids of fancy or invention yet rivalled even their attractive powers by its vivid descriptions of real events and characters, to which it was exclusively devoted. He was not merely bound by the limits of all historians to deal with realities only, but he rejected or despised many subjects, such as legends, superstitions, tales of chivalry, etc., which sometimes relieve both writers and students. He preferred interesting himself and others by strictly adhering to his own view of actual events and real personages, describing them with all the force and power of an attractive novelist.

In his time the admiration for fiction in England was greatly increased by such writers as Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, and Thackeray, whose delightful works attracted thoughtful readers from the continuous perusal of graver studies. Some regretted the popularity of these novelists, believing that they conveyed little

valuable instruction, and rather wasted time. Yet their wonderful knowledge of character, as well as the intense interest and good feeling they aroused, have finally established their fame. As, however, their novels seldom recalled British history like the works of Shakespeare and Scott, but depended chiefly on the imaginations of author and reader, they may have had a tendency to render historical study comparatively uninteresting.

Macaulay evidently had this idea, often regretting in his Essays the dullness of most histories, for he perceived that while imaginary persons described by Dickens and others were as natural and interesting as if they had really existed, many of the grandest characters of history excited comparatively slight interest owing to the dry or tedious style usual in historical narration. Macaulay saw the absurdity and injustice of such relative appreciation. He knew that no imaginary personages which the highest genius could conceive are entitled to the same interest or admiration due to those great master minds who have directed the actual destinies of the world. He resolved, therefore,

in this History, addressed chiefly to British readers, to incline them to its study by investing real events and persons with all that vividness of description hitherto almost exclusively devoted to works of imagination. His success, if it did not fulfil his hopes, probably exceeded his expectations; for since Walter Scott no British author has succeeded in arousing the same interest in historical characters.

Like his popular contemporary Charles Dickens, Macaulay apparently understood the British public taste with remarkable clearness and accuracy. While rather undervaluing the literature of his own time, he resolved to gratify the prevailing love for sensational writing by investing historic facts and characters with its peculiar charm. In this attempt he evidently succeeded, as the result proved, for his History immediately gained and seems likely to permanently retain general admiration in the critical enlightened age to which its varied merits were so eminently suited.

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